CITY HILIGHTS

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ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರ

ಮಹಾತ್ಮಾ ಗಾಂಧಿ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಉದ್ಯೋಗ ಖಾತ್ರಿ ಯೋಜನೆಯ 20 ವರ್ಷಗಳು

2 ಫೆಬ್ರವರಿ 2006 - ಇಂದು

ಭಾರತ	ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ
ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರಿಗೆ **4,420 ಕೋಟಿ+** ಉದ್ಯೋಗ ದಿನಗಳ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿ	ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರಿಗೆ **182.55 ಕೋಟಿ+** ಉದ್ಯೋಗ ದಿನಗಳ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿ
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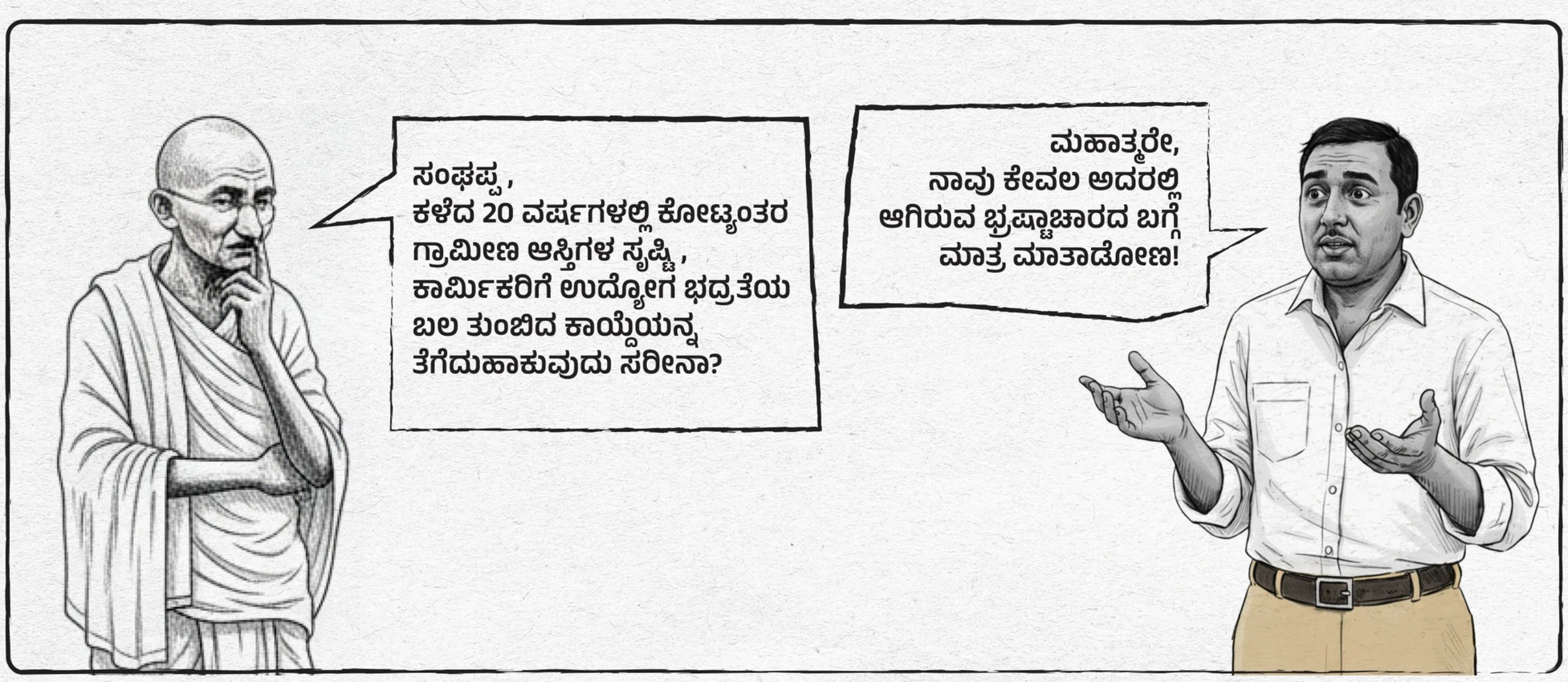
ಸಂಘಪ್ಪ ,
ಕಳೆದ 20 ವರ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕೋಟ್ಯಂತರ ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಆಸ್ತಿಗಳ ಸೃಷ್ಟಿ , ಕಾರ್ಮಿಕರಿಗೆ ಉದ್ಯೋಗ ಭದ್ರತೆಯ ಬಲ ತುಂಬಿದ ಕಾಯ್ದೆಯನ್ನ ತೆಗೆದುಹಾಕುವುದು ಸರೀನಾ?
ಮಹಾತ್ಮರೇ, ನಾವು ಕೇವಲ ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ಆಗಿರುವ ಭ್ರಷ್ಟಾಚಾರದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಮಾತಾಡೋಣ!
ಸಂಘಪ್ಪ ,
ನರೇಗಾದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ ಲೆಕ್ಕ ಪರಿಶೋಧನೆಗೆ ಬಂದಿರುವ ದೂರು ಹಾಗೂ ಅದೇ ಖುದ್ದಾಗಿ ಪತ್ತೆ ಹಚ್ಚಿರುವ ಪ್ರಕರಣಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಇಡೀ ದೇಶದಲ್ಲೇ ಸುಮಾರು 97% ದುರ್ಬಳಕೆ ಆಗಿರುವ ಹಣವನ್ನ ಸರ್ಕಾರ ಈಗಾಗಲೇ ವಸೂಲಾತಿ ಮಾಡಿ ತಪ್ಪಿತಸ್ತರನ್ನ ಶಿಕ್ಷೆಗೆ ಒಳಪಡಿಸಿದೆ ಅಂತ ಕೇಂದ್ರದ ಅಂಕಿ ಅಂಶಗಳೇ ಹೇಳುತ್ತಿವೆ.
ಹೀಗಿರುವಾಗ,
• ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣ ಜನರ ಉದ್ಯೋಗದ ಹಕ್ಕು
• ಸ್ವಾಭಿಮಾನದ ಬದುಕು ಕಟ್ಟಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಅವಕಾಶ
• ಗ್ರಾಮ ಪಂಚಾಯತಿಗಳ ಸ್ವರಾಜ್ಯದ ಅಧಿಕಾರ
ಮೊಟಕುಗಳಿಸಿದ್ದು ಏಕೆ?
ಅಯ್ಯೋ ಮಹಾತ್ಮರೇ, ವಿಕಸಿತ ಭಾರತ ಕಟ್ಟೋಕೆ ಇವನ್ನೆಲ್ಲಾ ನೀವು ತ್ಯಾಗ ಮಾಡಲೇಬೇಕು!

ದೇಶದ ಕೋಟ್ಯಂತರ ಜನರ ಸಾಮಾಜಿಕ & ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಭದ್ರತೆಯ ಅಡಿಪಾಯವಾಗಿರುವ ಮನರೇಗಾ ಯೋಜನೆ

ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ: ಗ್ರಾಮೀಣಾಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿ ಮತ್ತು ಪಂಚಾಯತ್ ರಾಜ್ ಇಲಾಖೆ

Budget CER Plan Gives K'taka Tier-2 Cities a Way Beyond

K'taka must fix finances and governance before CER funds can transform cities

BENGALURU

The Union Budget's proposal for City Economic Regions (CERs) opens a significant opportunity for Karnataka's tier-2 and tier-3 cities to step out of Bengaluru's long shadow and stake a claim in organised urban growth. Designed to promote region-led development, the scheme promises ₹5,000 crore for each CER over five years, to be allocated through a challenge-based process that rewards credible plans for jobs, infrastructure and governance reforms.

Presenting the Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman underlined the importance of cities as engines of growth, innovation and employment. She said the focus would now extend beyond metros to tier-2 and tier-3 cities and even temple towns, which need modern infrastructure and reliable civic amenities to unlock their economic potential. The CER framework seeks to harness agglomeration benefits by mapping regions around specific growth drivers rather than isolated municipal projects.

For Karnataka, the proposal could help rebalance an urban map that has long been dominated by Bengaluru. However, success will depend on how carefully the state identifies its candidate regions. Mysuru could leverage its strengths in IT services, heritage tourism and food processing. Mangaluru offers the potential of a port-led economy anchored in petrochemicals, logistics and fisheries. Hubballi–Dharwad brings rail manufacturing, a growing services sector and a strong educational base. Each region will need to demonstrate how investments can generate jobs beyond city limits and integrate surrounding towns through efficient transport and logistics networks.

What Karnataka's cities currently lack is a single planning framework that links housing, transport and industry across district boundaries. The CER approach hints at moving away from funding standalone flyovers or industrial parks toward regional programmes with defined revenue streams and scope for private participation.

Financing, however, remains a major hurdle. The Budget's broader push for urban financing includes incentives for municipal bonds, offering a ₹100 crore incentive for a single bond issue exceeding ₹1,000 crore. Most cities in Karnataka have limited experience with such instruments and will need to first strengthen accounting systems, improve credit ratings and expand land-based revenues before bond issues become viable.

The CER proposal offers Karnataka a structured pathway to diversify growth beyond Bengaluru. Swift selection of pilot regions, credible project pipelines and political will to reform city governance will determine whether the state can seize this opportunity—or watch the ₹5,000-crore promise flow to better-prepared competitors.

Uma Reddy Hails Budget, Sees Strong Boost for Growth

BENGALURU

FKCCI also welcomed the Bharat Vistar initiative, aimed at strengthening traditional and agro-based industries such as areca nut, coconut and sandalwood through improved market access and value addition.

The Karnataka Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) has welcomed the Union Budget 2026–27, stating that it provides a clear roadmap for sustained economic growth while maintaining fiscal discipline. FKCCI President Uma Reddy said the Budget addresses several long-standing concerns of industry and offers renewed momentum to manufacturing, MSMEs, infrastructure and ease of doing business.

Addressing the media, Uma Reddy said the Budget reflects a balanced approach that combines growth-oriented reforms with prudent fiscal management. "The Union Budget 2026–27 will strengthen India's growth momentum while keeping fiscal discipline in mind. Its emphasis on manufacturing, IT, MSMEs, infrastructure and simplified compliance aligns closely with industry priorities and job creation," she said.

She noted that the government's push towards trust-based governance, simplified regulatory frameworks and continued public capital expenditure would help create a predictable and stable policy environment. "Such clarity is critical for businesses to plan long-term investments and expand operations," Uma Reddy added. Highlighting measures for MSMEs, she said several proposals directly address challenges related to liquidity, competitiveness and formalisation. These include the ₹10,000 crore SME Growth Fund, mandatory use of the Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) by central public sector enterprises, revival of heritage industrial clusters and targeted tax and customs reforms. "These steps will significantly improve access to finance and strengthen the manufacturing ecosystem, while also boosting export competitiveness," she said.

Uma Reddy also welcomed the Budget's focus on electronics and semiconductor manufacturing, noting that it would create opportunities for ancillary and complementary industries. Improved access to finance and streamlined compliance mechanisms, she said, would help small businesses scale up and integrate better with global supply chains.

The Budget holds particular significance for Karnataka, given the state's strong base of MSMEs, start-ups, IT and digital services firms, and export-oriented manufacturing units. "The focus on MSME credit flow, logistics infrastructure, electronics manufacturing and development of Tier-II and Tier-III cities is encouraging for Karnataka," she said. She added that initiatives such as expanded TReDS coverage, professional compliance support for MSMEs and revival of industrial clusters would benefit Karnataka's industrial corridors and growth hubs. On infrastructure, Uma Reddy said proposals for high-speed rail corridors connecting Bengaluru with major economic centres would enhance productivity, logistics efficiency and regional growth.

Overall, she said the Budget strikes a fine balance between growth, reforms and inclusion, providing a strong foundation for India's journey towards becoming a developed economy.

QUICK READ

Missing Teen Found Dead in BWSSB Pipeline Sump

Bengaluru

A 14-year-old boy who had been missing for three days was found dead inside an open Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) pipeline sump near Thathaguni in south Bengaluru on Monday. The deceased has been identified as Preetham, son of Rajanikanth. Police suspect the boy may have accidentally fallen into the sump while passing through the area or playing nearby. The sump was reportedly left uncovered, posing a serious safety risk to the public, especially children. Local residents raised concerns over the negligence in leaving the sump open without protective barriers or warning signs. Kaggalipura police have registered a case and are investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Minor Girl Gives Birth in Bengaluru Village, POCSO Case Filed

Bengaluru

In Mayasandra village under Attibele police station limits in Bengaluru, a 17-year-old girl reportedly had a relationship with a man, later gave birth to a baby girl, and then fled from home. Her parents filed a complaint at Attibele police station against an unknown person under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Police have registered the case and initiated steps to identify and arrest the accused. Investigations are underway to trace the perpetrator and gather evidence in this serious child protection matter.

IDEAL Lab Inauguration Marks Structured Academia–Industry Collaboration in AI Research

BENGALURU

The inauguration of the Intelligent Data Engineering AI Lab (IDEAL) has marked the formal launch of a structured artificial intelligence research collaboration between CHRIST (Deemed to be University) and HL Mando Softtech India, signalling a significant step in strengthening academia–industry partnerships in advanced technology domains.

The IDEAL Lab is envisioned as a long-term collaborative platform that bridges academic research with industry-led problem solving. It aims to provide sustained industrial exposure to CHRIST University's faculty members, doctoral scholars and postgraduate students, while enabling joint research initiatives, academic publications and the co-creation of practical AI solutions.

Designed as an operational research space, the lab clearly defines roles and responsibilities for all participants, ensuring structured, outcome-driven engagement. Faculty members will lead research themes, doctoral researchers will focus on in-depth investigations, and postgraduate students will contribute through applied projects aligned with industry needs. This model is intended to produce measurable research outcomes while simultaneously building industry-ready talent.

The lab was inaugurated in the presence of Dr Fr CC Jose, Vice Chancellor of CHRIST University, and Hongyong Bhae, Chief Technology Officer and Chief Data Officer of HL Mando. Their participation highlighted the shared vision of both institutions to advance applied AI research that addresses real-world challenges and emerging technological demands.

IDEAL functions as a multidisciplinary research hub, drawing expertise from computing, engineering and data sciences. Research activities are anchored in real industry use cases and supported by rigorous academic methodologies, ensuring that outcomes meet both scholarly and practical benchmarks.

The lab operates under the academic framework of the Centre for Digital Innovation (CDI), established at CHRIST University in 2015. CDI provides institutional support for industry-linked research, international academic collaborations and applied digital systems, making it a strong foundation for the IDEAL initiative.

For HL Mando Softtech India, the collaboration reflects its commitment to fostering innovation, strengthening research capabilities and contributing to the development of a future-ready workforce. Together, the IDEAL Lab offers a scalable model for effective academia–industry collaboration in artificial intelligence research.

CJ Roy's Death: SIT Records Statements of I-T Officials

BENGALURU

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the death of Confident Group chairman CJ Roy has recorded the statements of income tax officials who were present at his Langford Town office on January 30, when he allegedly shot himself with his licensed pistol.

According to investigators, all Income Tax (I-T) personnel present at the office that day have been examined. The officials told the SIT that they had not questioned Roy and were at the premises only to carry out final scrutiny of documents seized during earlier searches. They said their visit was limited to verification of records and obtaining Roy's signature, along with signatures from some staff members. An officer said the I-T team maintained that their role did not go beyond routine verification and that they were unaware Roy was carrying a firearm. "They did not seize his mobile phone or briefcase and did not restrict his movement in any way," the officer said, adding that the officials claimed they did not interfere with Roy's regular office activities. Police, however, are approaching claims that the I-T officials did not interact with Roy with caution. "We cannot conclusively say there was no conversation at all. What is clear at this stage is that the officials did not prevent him from carrying out routine activities," an investigator said.

The SIT described the probe as being at an early stage. Crime scene reconstruction is yet to be conducted and will be carried out in the presence of the complainant, TA Joseph, founding director and managing director of Confident Group. Statements of a few employees have already been recorded, officials said.

Summons have been issued to Joseph, Roy's brother CJ Babu and other associates for questioning. Police had planned to record their statements on Sunday, but postponed the exercise after the family delayed taking custody of the body following the post-mortem on Saturday.

Investigators said they have several doubts regarding Joseph's complaint, particularly about the sequence of events on the day of the incident. Questions remain about when Roy reached the office, the nature of his interactions with the I-T officials, the time two men allegedly entered his chamber, and when Joseph was asked to step out.

NCC Cadets from Republic Day Camp Welcomed with Victory Rally

BENGALURU

Cadets of the Karnataka and Goa directorate of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) were accorded a rousing welcome with a victory rally in Bengaluru after their return from New Delhi, where they emerged as the Prime Minister's Banner and Trophy winners for the second consecutive year at the Republic Day Camp 2026.

The directorate finished as overall champions among 17 NCC directorates from across the country, excelling in drill, firing, cultural events and several national-level competitions. Their consistent all-round performance earned them top honours at the prestigious annual camp.

A cavalcade of Army trucks carrying the cadets set out from KSR Bengaluru railway station and proceeded to Brindavan College in Yelahanka. Escorted by traffic police personnel, the rally passed prominent landmarks including Vidhana Soudha and Lok Bhavan, before moving through Mehkri Circle and Hebbal, drawing attention and applause from onlookers along the route. The Karnataka and Goa directorate was represented by 124 cadets at the Republic Day Camp, comprising 76 Senior Division (boys) and 48 Senior Wing (girls) drawn from six NCC groups. The camp was held from December 28 to January 26, during which the cadets participated in a wide range of competitive and ceremonial events.

At the camp, the directorate secured first place in the flag area competition, second place in the line area competition, and third place in the Prime Minister's Rally, further underlining its strong showing.

Officials lauded the cadets for their discipline, teamwork and dedication, noting that the achievement reflects the sustained training standards and leadership within the Karnataka and Goa NCC directorate.

Argument between Friends over Auto Parking Ends in Murder

BENGALURU

A quarrel between friends over an auto-rickshaw parking issue turned fatal late at Ambedkar Colony near Nayandahalli, leaving one man dead and another injured.

The deceased has been identified as Guna (28), while his friend Velu sustained injuries in the attack. Police have arrested Vinod, Ajith, Kumar and Deena in connection with the murder.

According to the police, Guna and Vinod, who lived in the same locality, had an argument two days ago over parking an auto-rickshaw. The dispute escalated when Vinod, along with Ajith and Kumar, allegedly damaged Guna's auto during the altercation. Following a complaint, both parties were summoned to the Byatarayanapura police station, where they were warned and let off. However, the tension did not subside. After Guna returned from the police station, he was allegedly attacked by Vinod and his associates near his residence. During the assault, Guna was stabbed multiple times, while Velu, who tried to intervene, was also injured.

WATER SUPPLY STOPPAGE

City to Face Two-Day Cauvery Water Disruption on Feb 5–6

BENGALURU

Several parts of Bengaluru will face a two-day disruption in Cauvery water supply on February 5 and 6 as the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) undertakes emergency pipeline linking and maintenance works.

BWSSB Chairman Dr V Ram Prasath Manohar said the shutdown is required to facilitate critical pipeline connections involving large-diameter water lines as part of ongoing infrastructure upgrades. The work includes linking 1,200 mm and 700 mm diameter pipelines, which are essential to strengthening the city's water distribution network and ensuring long-term supply stability.

To execute the task safely, pumping operations under the Cauvery Water Supply Scheme Phases I and II will be completely stopped for 24 hours. The shutdown will begin at 6 am on Thursday, February 5, and continue until 6 am on Friday, February 6. During this period, no Cauvery water will be pumped to the city's reservoirs.

As a result, water supply will be disrupted across a wide range of residential, commercial and institutional areas in the city. The BWSSB chairman appealed to residents to store adequate water in advance and use it judiciously during the disruption period. Tanker supply may be arranged in critical locations depending on demand, officials said.

Areas likely to be affected include Magadi Road, Padmanabha Nagar, Banashankari 5th Phase, Kumaraswamy Layout Phases 1 and 2, Uttarahalli, ISRO Layout, Kanakapura Main Road, JP Nagar Phases 1, 2 and 3, Jayanagar Blocks 4 to 9, Wilson Garden, Koramangala Blocks 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, Madiwala, Domlur, Kodihalli, Ejipura, Vivek Nagar, Austin Town, Shanthinagar, Richmond Town, MG Road, Ashok Nagar and Langford Town.

Water supply will also be affected in Chamarajapete, Srinagar, Hombegowda Nagar, Lakkasandra, Jagajeevanram Nagar, Mavalli, Shankarapuram, Kempegowda Nagar, Sudhama Nagar, Hosakerehalli, ITI Layout, Srinivasa Nagar, Bairasandra, Siddapura, LIC Colony, NIMHANS Hospital area and surrounding localities.

BWSSB officials said supply will be gradually restored after pumping resumes, and some areas may experience low pressure even after February 6. Citizens have been urged to cooperate, noting that the works are crucial for improving the city's water infrastructure and reducing future disruptions.

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LS erupts over Rahul China remarks

Parliament descended into chaos as Rahul Gandhi's attempt to cite a magazine on China border issues triggered protests and adjournments on Monday

NEW DELHI

Heavy scenes unfolded in the Lok Sabha on Monday after Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi tried to quote from a magazine article that carried excerpts from the unpublished memoirs of former Army Chief General M.M. Naravane. Gandhi said the contents related to alleged Chinese activities along the border and raised concerns about national security and defence preparedness.

The Speaker stopped him, saying parliamentary rules do not allow members to quote from newspapers or magazines in the House. Ministers from the ruling side supported the ruling and objected to Gandhi's remarks. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh asked whether the book being referred to had even been officially published. Home Minister Amit Shah also said unverified material should not be used in Parliament.

Gandhi insisted he was referring to a published magazine report and questioned why the government was uncomfortable with the issue being discussed. He said the matter involving China was serious and that he had the right to respond to comments made earlier about his party's patriotism.

Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav urged the Chair to allow the discussion, calling the border issue sensitive and important. Despite this, protests and loud sloganeering continued from both sides of the House.

The Lok Sabha was adjourned more than once as the ruckus refused to die down. When the House briefly reconvened, Gandhi again tried to raise the issue, but disruptions resumed. Eventually, the Speaker adjourned the House for the rest of the day, with no agreement reached and political tempers still running high.

The confrontation highlighted deep divisions between government and opposition over rules, transparency, and how national security matters should be discussed.

Lok Sabha witnessed repeated adjournments after Rahul Gandhi attempted to cite a magazine report quoting alleged excerpts from former Army chief M.M. Naravane's unpublished memoirs on China. The Speaker disallowed references, ministers objected, opposition protested, and disruptions forced the House to adjourn for the day amid loud protests and sloganeering.

- Rahul Gandhi raised concerns over China using a magazine article citing unpublished memoir excerpts
- Speaker ruled that newspapers or magazines cannot be quoted in the House
- Government questioned authenticity and national security implications
- Opposition insisted the issue was serious and deserved discussion
- Continuous protests led to multiple adjournments and loss of proceedings

CM Slams Centre, Defends Karnataka's Development Record

BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister strongly criticized the Central Government while replying to the debate on the Governor's speech in the Assembly on January 22. He said the Governor left abruptly without completing the speech or mentioning "Jai Samvidhan," which, he added, was not appropriate.

The Chief Minister emphasized that his government is not against the Governor but opposes the Centre's policies, especially the renaming of MNREGA to "VB G Ram G." He pointed out that earlier leaders, including former CM H.D. Kumaraswamy, had supported similar schemes.

The Chief Minister also assured action against officers failing their duties and clarified that illegal Bangladeshis would not receive state benefits.

He concluded by rejecting criticism from BJP MLA Sunil Kumar, saying the government has fulfilled promises and provided a sensitive, people-focused administration. The Motion of Thanks on the Governor's Address was passed by both Houses on Monday.

- ₹2 lakh crore lost since 2020 (GST & compensation)
- 1.45M houses built under Congress govt
- 15 legislators spoke for 15h17m in Assembly
- Farmer support: maize, sugarcane, coconut, musli

Raut Raises Suspicion Over Ajit Pawar crash

MUMBAI

Shiv Sena UBT leader Sanjay Raut on Monday called the plane crash that killed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar suspicious and demanded a full and transparent investigation.

Speaking to reporters, Raut said questions were natural because of Pawar's political importance and the events that happened before the crash. He claimed that facts coming out after the incident point to something wrong and need serious attention. Raut alleged that Ajit Pawar had earlier expressed a wish to return home politically. He claimed that after this, BJP leaders threatened him using files related to the Sinchan scam. Raut said Pawar had answered those charges, but within ten days he died in what he described as a mysterious crash.

Drawing a comparison with the death of Justice B H Loya, Raut asked whether hidden forces were involved. He also said it was inhuman to discuss NCP leadership immediately after Pawar's death.

Meanwhile, Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu said the aircraft black box has been recovered. He confirmed that the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has started a probe and assured it would be fair, transparent, and time bound.

The crash occurred in Baramati on January twenty eight and also killed four others. The incident has triggered political reactions across Maharashtra.

Air India Dreamliner grounded over fuel switch

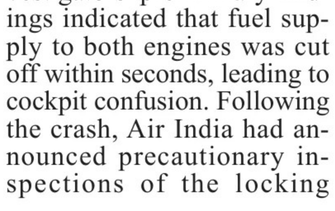
NEW DELHI

An Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner scheduled for a London–Bengaluru flight was grounded before departure after a pilot reported a potential problem with the aircraft's fuel control switch during routine pre-flight checks. Airline sources said the aircraft was withdrawn as a precaution, and technical teams, along with the original equipment manufacturer, are examining the system on priority. Passengers were accommodated on alternative flights.

The grounding has drawn attention because fuel control switches were scrutinized after last year's June 2025 Air India crash near Ahmedabad, which killed 260 people, including 241 passengers. Investigators' preliminary findings indicated that fuel supply to both engines was cut off within seconds, leading to cockpit confusion. Following the crash, Air India had announced precautionary inspections of the locking mechanisms across its Boeing 787 and 737 fleet.

On Monday, the Civil Aviation Ministry told Parliament that investigations into all possible causes of last year's crash are ongoing. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau said the final report will be released after thorough technical analysis. Safety experts noted that precautionary groundings are standard to prevent risks and protect passengers.

Airline officials stressed that safety remains the top priority, and any suspected technical fault, however minor, triggers immediate inspection and corrective action.



Foxconn faces tax and local employment row in Karnataka

BENGALURU

Foxconn Hon Hai Technology India Mega Development Pvt. Ltd is in dispute with the Bengaluru Rural Gram Panchayat over alleged tax evasion, violations of building regulations, and failure to employ local residents. The Panchayat has issued a notice demanding details of approved building plans, construction licences, completion and occupancy certificates, and survey-wise built-up area information for facilities in Doddagollahalli and Aruvanahalli villages, covering 5.33 lakh square metres. Officials noted that while large-scale construction appears complete and operations have reportedly started, official records still list the land as vacant. The Panchayat warned that legal action under the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act would follow if Foxconn does not comply within seven days.

MAMATA SLAMS CEC OVER BENGAL VOTER ROLL ROW

NEW DELHI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday strongly criticized Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar after a meeting in the national capital, accusing the Election Commission of unfairly targeting her state during a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists.

Banerjee, who met the CEC along with Trinamool Congress leaders and families she described as affected by the revision process, said she had "never seen such an arrogant Election Commissioner." She alleged that nearly 58 lakh names were removed from electoral rolls in West Bengal without giving people a fair chance to respond.

"I respect the constitutional post, but no one should misuse power," Banerjee told reporters after the meeting. She questioned why Bengal was being singled out and said elections should be a celebration of democracy, not a reason for fear among voters.

The Chief Minister also raised concerns about heavy police presence outside Banga Bhawan in Delhi, where members of her party and visiting citizens had gathered. She claimed some people from Bengal felt intimidated. However, Delhi Police said no officers entered the premises or stopped anyone from moving in or out.

Banerjee arrived in Delhi on Sunday and was accompanied by Trinamool MPs Abhishek Banerjee and Kalyan Banerjee. She had sought the meeting to discuss complaints related to the voter roll revision exercise in the state.

The Election Commission had earlier agreed to hear her concerns. There was no immediate detailed response from the Commission after the meeting.

The issue has now taken a political turn, with the Trinamool Congress accusing central authorities of bias, while officials maintain that electoral roll revisions follow established rules and procedures.

Government made Governor speak lies: Has CM Siddaramaiah become a mouse, asks Ashoka

BENGALURU

Governor's Speech Under Fire

Participating in the thanksgiving resolution debate in the Assembly, Ashoka alleged that the Congress government had "made the Governor speak lies." He took a swipe at Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, saying the once-projected "tiger" of Karnataka politics had now become a "mouse," unable to take firm decisions or stand up for the state's interests. Ashoka also questioned the renaming of Ramanagara district and alleged the systematic removal of Mahatma Gandhi's name from official records and institutions.

Congress Resolutions and Amendments

Ashoka said the Congress government had passed 18 resolutions against the Centre, creating avoidable political confrontation instead of focusing on governance. He pointed out that the Congress had amended the Constitution 72 times, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government had done so only eight times.

Scheme Naming and Corruption Allegations

Raising concerns over government schemes, Ashoka claimed that out of 454 schemes, a large number were named after Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, while Mahatma Gandhi's contribution was largely ignored.

Unfinished Projects and Mounting Debt

Ashoka alleged that funds allocated to the Kalyana Karnataka Board and the Grihalakshmi scheme had not reached beneficiaries. He claimed Siddaramaiah had pushed the state's debt to a record ₹7.64 lakh crore. Alleged irregularities in MUDA, excise, Dalit welfare funds, and road projects were cited as examples of misgovernance.

Law and Order and Social Concerns

Pointing to deteriorating law and order, Ashoka said rape cases had risen by 23%, POCSO cases by 5%, and cybercrime losses touched ₹5,473 crore. He also alleged police involvement in drug smuggling and criticised the denial of land to artist B. Jayashree, claiming locals were being sidelined.

HASINA DECLARED FUGITIVE

Hasina Sentenced To 10 Years in Jail Over Corruption Allegations

DHAKA

Sheikh Hasina, who has been living in exile in India since August 5, 2024, was designated a fugitive by the court after she failed to appear during the trial. The cases were brought by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which accused her and others of violating rules in allocating two plots under the Rajuk New Town Project in Purbachol without following proper procedures.

Several of Hasina's family members were also convicted. Her nephew Radwan Mujib Siddiq and niece Azmina Siddiq were each sentenced to seven years, while another niece, Tulip Rizwana Siddiq, received four years behind bars. A Rajuk official who had surrendered to the court, Mohammad Khurshid Alam, was given a two-year term.

In addition to prison sentences, all those convicted were fined Tk 1 lakh each, with the court ordering an extra six months' imprisonment if the fines are not paid. The judgment was announced around midday in Dhaka.

The corruption verdict comes amid ongoing political upheaval in Bangladesh following Hasina's fall from power after nationwide protests in mid-2024. In July 2025, she was separately indicted by Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal for alleged crimes against humanity linked to a brutal government crackdown during weeks of unrest the previous year. Hasina's supporters have called the legal actions politically motivated, while the government and prosecutors say the rulings show a commitment to enforcing anti-corruption laws and accountability.

The former prime minister remains in India.

QUICK READ

Class 9 boy dies falling into open chamber

BENGALURU

A Class 9 student, Preetham, tragically died after falling into an uncovered concrete chamber at a BWSSB work site on Kanakapura Road, Bengaluru. He was walking along the pipeline road stretch when he accidentally slipped into the open chamber, which lacked barricades or warning signs. The boy had been reported missing since January 29, and his father filed a complaint at Kaggalipura police station. Authorities later recovered his body from the site. Family members accused the water board of gross negligence. Kaggalipura police have registered a case against BWSSB engineers and staff.

K'taka Adjusts Urdu School Timings During Ramzan

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has revised school hours for Urdu-medium primary, upper primary, and high schools during Ramzan in the 2025-26 academic year. The change applies to all government, aided, and unaided Urdu schools across the state, from the start of Ramzan until March 20. State Home Minister G. Parameshwara said the move is not minority appeasement but a step toward equal opportunities for Urdu-medium students. The decision follows a review of previous orders and a representation by the Karnataka State Primary School Education Association.

QUICK READ

Authorities seek heirs of unknown man

Gadag

The Gadag Railway Police are seeking the heirs of an unknown man who died after being hit by a train between Binkadakatti and Gadag stations. The deceased, estimated to be 55-60 years old, had a round face, broad forehead, pointed nose, fair skin, white moustache, and black-and-white hair.

He was about 5 feet 4 inches tall and of medium build. At the time, he wore a light blue pullover shirt, brown overcoat, black undershirt, and black trousers. Anyone with information is urged to contact Gadag Railway Police at 08372-278744 or the control room at 080-22871291 immediately.

Admissions open for class six at Itagi

Koppal

Adarsh Vidyalaya School, Itagi village, Yelaburga taluk, invites online applications for Class 6 admissions for 2026–27 until February 25 via schooleducation.karnataka.gov.in or vidyavahini.karnataka.gov.in. Applicants need Class 5 SATS number, photo, caste and income certificates, Aadhaar, parents' mobile number, and school details. Other-area students require residence and school certificates. Contact Headmaster: 9945420957, 8494858187 during school hours.

Disabled-friendly scooter applications open in Gadag

Gadag

The Rona Municipality has invited applications for disabled-friendly scooters for eligible beneficiaries under its SFC grant program. The scheme covers funds saved from 2012-13 to 2017-18, offering 3% to 30% support for the purchase. Interested applicants must submit their forms by February 8, 2026, before 5:30 PM. Beneficiaries who have previously received scooters under this program are not eligible. Applications and further details can be obtained from the Rona Municipality Office during office hours. The initiative aims to provide better mobility and independence to differently-abled citizens in the municipality, helping them participate more fully in daily life.

Officials warn against banned additives in street foods

Itnal urged students to develop knowledge, creativity, discipline, and values, while teachers and parents guide them with care

KOPPAL

The District Level Advisory Committee of the Food Safety and Drug Administration has directed strict checks to prevent the use of banned substances and artificial colours in roadside foods such as gobi manchurian and pani puri.

Chairing a meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's office, Committee Chairman Dr. Suresh B. Itnal said the government has already issued clear orders banning harmful additives used to enhance taste and appearance. He asked officials to identify hotels and street vendors violating the rules and take action.

Dr. Itnal warned that such substances pose serious health risks. He instructed officials to conduct regular inspections and ensure strict compliance with food safety norms across the district.

He also stressed quality checks on groceries used in residential schools, hostels, and anganwadis. Clean storage in godowns must be ensured. Milk collection centres in villages should follow quality testing standards, and officials must prevent the sale of fake milk or milk products made with harmful chemicals.

Complaints about the use of spoiled eggs in bakeries and food stalls were also discussed. Officials were told to conduct sample testing and act against offenders. Quality of food grains supplied through fair price shops must also be monitored. Zilla Panchayat CEO Varnit Negi advised the public to check expiry dates on packaged foods and avoid unhygienic street food. He called for awareness drives on safe food habits.

Food Safety Designated Officer Dr. Alakananda Malagi explained enforcement steps taken by the department. Several district and taluk officials from various departments attended the meeting. Authorities said surprise inspections would continue to protect public health and ensure safe food practices.

Machidevara birth anniversary observed at NWKRTC Office

HUBBALLI

The birth anniversary of 12th-century saint and social reformer Shiva Sharan Sri Madiwala Machidevara was observed at the North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) Central Office in Hubballi. The programme was marked with respect and devotion as officials and staff gathered to pay tribute.

The event began with the lighting of a ceremonial lamp and offering of floral tributes to a portrait of Sri Madiwala Machidevara. The atmosphere was calm and respectful as employees remembered the saint's teachings and values.

Assistant Security and Vigilance Officer Jagadish Koli addressed the gathering. He said Sri Madiwala Machidevara had delivered a strong message of equality in the 12th century. He explained that the saint worked to remove caste differences and harmful superstitions from society. Koli stressed that people today should understand these messages and follow them in their daily lives.

Jagadish Koli said 12th-century saint Sri Madiwala Machidevara promoted equality, opposing caste and superstitions, urging people today to understand and apply his teachings in daily life

Public Relations Officer Naveen Kumar Tippa also spoke on the occasion. He shared details about the life, service, and spiritual thoughts of Sri Madiwala Machidevara. He said the saint's teachings continue to inspire people to live with honesty, equality, and compassion.

Several officers and staff members attended the programme. Among those present were Naveen Kumar Tippa, Jagadish Koli, Jayappa Malgi, A.Y. Ramajanavara Siddalingesh Patteda, Anupakumar Mane, and other central office employees. Virupaksha Kattimani compered the programme and ensured the event moved smoothly.

The organisers said such programmes help spread awareness about great saints and their social messages. They added that remembering leaders like Sri Madiwala Machidevara encourages unity and moral values in society.

SC, ST athletes incentive applications extended

KOPPAL

The application window for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) athletes to receive incentive grants for winning medals in official sports events has been extended till February 10, officials said. The grants are available under the SC Sub-Scheme and ST Sub-Scheme for athletes who won medals in international, national, or state-level competitions during the year 2025-26. Eligible athletes can apply online at Seva Sindhu.

Athletes must be from Karnataka and provide caste certificates as proof of eligibility. The incentive is only for recognized official championships organized by international or government-approved sports bodies, including Olympic, Asian, and Commonwealth Games. Those representing other states, services, or private teams are not eligible.

Students from class six onwards can apply, but senior-level national or international participants are excluded. Only the highest medal won in a year will be considered, even if an athlete competes in multiple events. Applicants must submit supporting documents including caste, income certificates, Aadhaar, ration card, and bank account details. Bank accounts must be in the athlete's name, with a copy of the passbook showing account number, IFSC, and name.

The Assistant Director of the Koppal Youth Empowerment and Sports Department emphasized that the incentive is based solely on performance from the previous calendar year.

He urged students to develop knowledge, creativity, discipline, and values, while teachers and parents guide them with care

BEO says human resources drive national growth

DHARWAD

Dharwad Rural Block Education Officer Ramakrishna Sadalagi said students must grow into skilled and value-based individuals to become strong human resources for the nation. He spoke at the Gyanjyoti Festival organised by Gyanjyoti Vidyalaya, run by Thimmapur Vidyachetan Education Society, at Thakur Kalyana Mantapa.

He advised students to gain deep knowledge, creativity, discipline, and good values. He said qualities like leadership, honesty, responsibility, compassion, tolerance, and self-confidence help students succeed. He also urged teachers and parents to guide children with care and attention.

Retired editor Gurumoorty Yaragambalimath said student life is like a period of dedication and learning. With knowledge, experience, discipline, and focus, students can reach their goals and celebrate success.

Assistant Director of the Information Department Dr. Suresh Hiremath, KUD Mathematics Assistant Professor Dr. H.S. Ramane, Karnataka Law University Assistant Professor Dr. Manjanna Jangawada, and SMG Organisation President Shivananda Javali attended as guests. Vidyachetan Education Society Secretary Sangayya Hiremath presided over the function.

Teacher Seroon Lagali welcomed the gathering, Headmistress Bindu Lagali presented the report, and School Board Director Mrutyunjaya Hiremath delivered the vote of thanks.

Cultural programmes by students added colour to the event and received appreciation from parents and guests. Talented students were honoured during the programme. Organisers said the festival aimed to encourage learning, values, and confidence among children while strengthening cooperation between teachers and parents in guiding students toward bright futures and responsible citizenship.

Outsourced workers protest nine month salary delay

AMINAGAD

Outsourced employees of the Aminagad Town Panchayat staged a protest on Monday by holding a dharna in front of the Town Panchayat office demanding payment of salaries pending for nine months.

Computer operators drivers water supply staff and other outsourced workers from health and water supply branches joined the protest and raised slogans against the administration. They said they have been working regularly but have not received salaries due to shortage of funds and poor tax collection by the Town Panchayat.

Employees said the delay has caused serious financial problems making it hard to manage rent education household expenses and medical needs.

Many families are struggling to survive and the workers warned that protests will intensify if salaries are not released immediately.

Town Panchayat officials said efforts are being made to arrange funds and clear the pending payments as early as possible.

The incident has highlighted the growing crisis faced by outsourced workers in local bodies across Hungund taluk and Bagalkot district.

Residents urged authorities to act quickly and ensure timely salaries saying such delays damage morale public services and trust while demanding accountability transparency and long term financial planning to protect workers dignity and livelihoods across the town panchayat system without further excuses or delay anymore.

Savita leaders recall barbers' proud medical history

GADAG

Members of the Savita Samaj in Gadag celebrated Savita Maharshi Jayanti with cultural pride and a strong message about their community's historic role in society. The event, called Gangimadi, was organised by the Gadag District Savita Samaj near the Savita Maharshi Circle on Naragund Road.

District president Krishna H. Hadapada spoke on the occasion. He said that in medieval times, barbers in many parts of the world were not only hairdressers but also worked as dentists and even surgeons. They treated wounds, cleaned injuries, and performed small medical procedures when trained doctors were not easily available.

He said barbers formed associations centuries ago and built a strong professional identity. He called it a matter of pride that such unity existed as early as 1096. He urged the community to celebrate World Barbers Day on September 16 in a grand way at the Savita Maharshi Circle in Gadag.

Other leaders also spoke and encouraged members to feel proud of their identity and history. Speakers said the community should leave behind feelings of inferiority, unite strongly, and work for social progress. They stressed that remembering their past achievements would help build confidence among younger generations.

Several community elders and office-bearers from different towns attended the programme. Floral tributes were offered to Savita Maharshi, sweets were distributed, and crackers were burst to mark the celebration. Organisers said the event was meant to inspire unity, self-respect, and awareness about the long history and contributions of the Savita community. They added that such gatherings strengthen bonds and remind people to move forward together with dignity and shared purpose in the years ahead for all members.

DOCUMENT MISSING: KHB SALE DEED

I Kallappa G Shirahatti & I lost the original document purchase deed (KHB Sale Deed) while traveling on:29-01-2026 in Vijayapur Email:ramu.shirahatti83@gmail.com 2. Now reported at the police station. The document report serial number will be as:2034333/2026. 2:30-01-2026.
Please if anyone has it, please call the following address or phone number and deliver it.
Signature/-
Kallappa G Shirahatti LIG 126 HUDCO Jalnagar Vijayapur-09
: 8095268536

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

SP Arasiddhi urges parents to nurture talents

KOPPAL

District Superintendent of Police Dr. Ram L. Arasiddhi urged parents not to compare children but to nurture their individual talents while inaugurating Educare English Medium School's annual day in Koppal. He stressed patience, confidence-building, and mental health support amid rising stress among students. Praising Educare's decade-long service, he highlighted the role of good institutions in shaping responsible, confident citizens who face challenges bravely and succeed in life.

SPARSH SPREADS AWARENESS

Sparsh Campaign Promotes Leprosy Awareness

KOPPAL

The Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaign was held at MLA Government Model Higher Primary School in Koppal on Monday, bringing together health officials, teachers, and students to spread awareness about leprosy and end social stigma.

The programme was organised jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, District Health and Family Welfare Department, the District Leprosy Eradication Office, the Taluka Health Office, and the City Primary Health Center.

Dr. Mahesh Umachagi, Medical Officer of the City Primary Health Center, said this year's campaign theme is "Ending Discrimination is Preserving Dignity." He explained that the drive runs from January 30 to February 13. The goal is early detection, timely treatment, and removal of fear and misunderstanding about the disease.

He said leprosy is caused by bacteria and spreads mainly through droplets from untreated patients. Common signs include light or copper-coloured patches on the skin, numbness, weakness in hands or feet, and wounds that do not heal. Free treatment is available at government hospitals, he added.

District Health Education Officer Shivananda spoke about the role of students in spreading awareness at home and in their neighbourhoods. Area Health Education Officer Gangamma administered an oath encouraging people to end discrimination and support those affected.

Headmaster Andappa said such programmes help children learn about health and become responsible citizens. Doctors, health staff, ASHA workers, teachers, and many students took part in the event, making it a meaningful awareness programme for the community. Organisers said continued awareness and early treatment can completely cure leprosy and prevent disability, urging everyone to share correct information and treat patients with kindness and respect in every village today.

QUICK READ

Liquor Sale Banned During Gangolli Mari Jatre

Udupi

The Gangolli Police have banned the sale of liquor during the Sri Mahankali Amman Temple Kharvikeri Mari Jatre to maintain law and order and ensure public safety. Under Rule 21 of the Karnataka Excise Act, 1965, and Rule 3 of the Karnataka Excise (Sale of Indian and Foreign Liquor) Rules, 1968, bars, restaurants, and wine shops with liquor licenses are ordered to remain closed. Excise offices in the area will also be closed, and a dry day has been declared in the affected villages. District Magistrate Swaroop T.K. emphasized public cooperation during the festival for smooth celebrations and safety.

Mandya Youth office invites car rental quotations

Mandya

The District Youth Officer of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat) Mandya has invited sealed quotations from travel agencies, tour operators, or private individuals to hire a medium-sized 5-seater car on a monthly rental basis for official use. Preferred models include Maruti Swift Dzire, Hyundai Aura, Verna, Mahindra Scorpio-N, TUV 300, or equivalents. The rental will cover driver, fuel, maintenance, insurance, taxes, and licenses, with a maximum usage of 1,200 km and 10 days per month. Quotations must be submitted by February 6 at the MY Bharat Mandya office near Zilla Panchayat, PES Engineering College Road.

Prabha Mallikarjun says opposition voices being silenced

Dr. Mallikarjun said Rahul Gandhi was reportedly blocked from raising national security and military concerns, undermining democratic values

DAVANAGERE

Davangere Member of Parliament Dr. Prabha Mallikarjun has expressed strong displeasure, alleging that opposition parties are not being given proper opportunities to speak in Parliament.

In a statement, he said ruling party MPs are being allowed to freely speak about the failures of the previous UPA government, while opposition leaders are not getting equal chances to question the present government. He described this as unhealthy for democracy.

Dr. Mallikarjun referred to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and said he was reportedly denied an opportunity to speak on important national matters. According to him, Rahul Gandhi wanted to raise serious concerns related to national security and military preparedness in Parliament. He said preventing such discussions goes against democratic values.

He added that Parliament is not the property of the ruling party alone. Instead, it is a place meant for debate, discussion, and accountability. He stressed that both the ruling side and the opposition have equal responsibility in strengthening democracy.

The MP said silencing opposition voices weakens democratic institutions and reduces public trust in the system. He stated that democracy becomes strong only when every elected representative gets a fair chance to present their views.

Dr. Mallikarjun urged that all parties should respect parliamentary traditions and allow open discussions on issues that concern the country. He said constructive debate helps in better decision-making and benefits the people.

He concluded by saying that denying speaking time to opposition leaders sends a wrong message and goes against the spirit of the Constitution, which values freedom of expression and democratic participation.

Probe sought into alleged irregularities in SUDA

SHIVAMOGGA

Prasannakumar alleged 13 SUDA projects under Sundaresh involved crores in irregularities, with contractors and officials, including junior engineer Dinesh, playing key roles, according to Lokayukta disclosures

Former MLA and JD(S) leader K.B. Prasannakumar has demanded a detailed investigation into alleged irregularities in the Shivamogga Urban Development Authority (SUDA). Addressing a press conference, he claimed that several housing and land development projects meant for the poor were misused.

He said the government had introduced schemes to provide houses and sites for homeless people, and agencies like Karnataka Housing Board and SUDA were given responsibility. However, he alleged that many of these projects had turned into "real estate scams" instead of serving the needy.

Prasannakumar stated that nearly 13 projects were taken up after Sundaresh became SUDA president. He claimed crores of rupees were involved in irregularities. Contractors Gurusai and Basavaraj have already shared information with the Lokayukta, he said, adding that some SUDA officials were also involved. He specifically named junior engineer Dinesh, accusing him of playing a key role in the alleged wrongdoing.

Giving an example, he said that in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Layout, only 518 metres of work was completed under the 1441 MIRS Park project, but full payment was released. He also alleged poor management of works in Orugadur and misuse of funds in SUDA office renovation.

All these works, he said, were done in an unscientific and low-quality manner. He added that even the Lokayukta had raised concerns about large-scale misuse of funds. Prasannakumar urged the new Deputy Commissioner to conduct a full probe into all SUDA projects.

Several leaders, including Deepak Singh, Raghu, Venkatesh, Dayanand, H.M. Sagayya and others, were present.

Lokayukta to hold public grievance meeting

UDUPI

The Udupi Lokayukta Division will host a public grievance and relations meeting on February 6, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at the Karkala Taluk Government Tourist Office Hall. Deputy Superintendents of Police, Inspectors, and the Superintendent of Police of Mangalore Division will attend. Citizens can raise complaints against government officials causing delays or inconvenience in public services. Those unable to attend can submit applications in Forms 1 and 2 along with affidavits to the Udupi Lokayukta Office or the Karnataka Lokayukta office in Bangalore. Contact numbers are available for Deputy Superintendents and Inspectors for assistance.

Devaraju claims the property belongs to Lakshmamma, received rights via 2020 GPA, and filed a case with conflicting boundaries

Land Dispute Involving Yash's Mother Reaches Court

HASSAN

A land ownership dispute involving actor Yash's mother, Pushpa Arunkumar, has reached the courts after conflicting property documents surfaced for the same site in Hassan city.

Police have temporarily slowed down the tension between Pushpa and Devaraju, a General Power of Attorney (GPA) holder for a woman named Lakshmamma. Both sides are claiming legal ownership of a 40x60 site in Vidyanagar, which falls under Hassan Municipal Corporation limits.

According to documents held by Pushpa, she bought the site in January 2020 from Girish Kom Mahalingappa, who had earlier purchased it in 2007. Records she provided trace the ownership back to a sale made in 1982. She later built a compound wall and says she has been in peaceful possession of the land since her purchase.

Devaraju, however, claims the property belongs to Lakshmamma and says he received rights through a GPA in 2020. He has filed a case in a Hassan court. His documents reportedly show different boundary descriptions compared to those in Pushpa's records.

One major difference is that Pushpa's papers mention a road on the southern side of the site, while Devaraju's records do not show any road. The two document sets also reportedly carry different survey numbers and property details.

Pushpa has questioned how a dispute has come up after many years without objections and has alleged lapses by officials in issuing records. Devaraju has alleged cheating in earlier transactions. Authorities have not issued a detailed response. The court is expected to decide ownership after reviewing all documents.

Backward Classes scholarship application deadline extended

UDUPI

The Backward Classes Welfare Department has extended the deadline for submitting online applications for various scholarship and assistance programs. Eligible students can now apply for the Post-Matric Scholarship, Post-Matric Qualification Scholarship for Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Castes, Fees Refund, and the Vidyasiri-Meal and Housing Assistance Scheme. These programs support Backward Classes students enrolled in post-matric courses this year, including Category-1 Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic students. Applications can be submitted through the official departmental website. For further details or guidance, students and parents can contact the departmental helpline at 8050770004. The extension aims to ensure that more eligible students benefit from these schemes.

Malavalli police crack multiple thefts, arrest accused

MANDYA

Malavalli police have solved several theft cases reported in January and arrested multiple accused persons, district Superintendent of Police Shobharani said at a press meet. Officers traced stolen bikes, temple valuables, and housebreaking property during separate investigations across the taluk.

In one case, thieves were stealing motorcycles to travel for funeral gatherings, police said. A bike owned by Nandish was stolen from the KSRTC bus stand on January 9. A special team detained three young men who were moving suspiciously near the stand. During questioning, they confessed to stealing vehicles from different places. Police recovered 19 bikes of various brands from their possession.

In another incident, a theft occurred on January 16 at Pattaladamma temple in Sagya Saraguru village. Police arrested six people from different districts of Karnataka and neighboring Tamil Nadu. Officers seized about 24 grams of gold ornaments, 245 grams of silver items, cash from the temple hundi, puja articles, watches, a motorcycle, and a goods vehicle. Investigation also showed the group had stolen goats and sold them.

Police also cracked a housebreaking case reported on January 17 at the house of Gangadhar. A minor boy in conflict with the law and his father were taken into custody. Stolen jewelry weighing 144 grams of gold and 46 grams of silver chains were recovered.

SP Shobharani praised the Malavalli police team for quick action and said efforts will continue to prevent theft and protect public property. She urged citizens to secure homes, avoid leaving vehicles unattended, and share information about suspicious movements, assuring that night patrols and surveillance would be strengthened across vulnerable areas of taluk.

Koppal launches registration for pension schemes

KOPPAL

The Koppal Sub-Division Labour Officer Sudha Garaga has urged unorganized sector workers to register under the Pradhan Mantri Shramyogi Maan-Dhan and NPS Traders Scheme for financial security in old age.

The Central Government aims to provide a fixed monthly pension of ₹3,000 to workers after they turn 60. A special registration campaign is underway from January 15 to March 15 in Koppal district. Workers aged 18 to 40 who are not receiving ESI or EPF benefits are eligible.

Under the scheme, monthly contributions range from ₹55 to ₹200 depending on age. Once contributions are paid, the government transfers them to the bank account, and the pension becomes payable after retirement.

All unorganized sector workers can enroll, including building and construction workers, self-help group members, Anganwadi and ASHA workers, mid-day meal staff, fishermen, street vendors, retail traders, NREGA workers, private transport workers, beedi workers, and self-employed workers.

Applicants must visit their nearest Common Service Centers (CSC) with Aadhaar card, bank passbook, and first month's contribution to register.

For further details, workers can contact the District Labour Officer's Office in Koppal or the Labour Inspector's offices in Koppal, Kushtagi, and Gangavathi.

Officials emphasized that timely registration will ensure long-term financial security for unorganized sector workers and their families in the district.

Udupi reviews app based auto services plan

UDUPI

Deputy Commissioner Swaroop T.K. said that digital app based auto services can operate in Udupi city only after getting proper government permits. He spoke at a meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Manipal to discuss issues linked to Namma Yatri and Rapid app autos working in the city.

He said there are both benefits and problems with app based transport, so officials will study them carefully before allowing full operations. If companies submit valid licenses, insurance, and other records, the Regional Transport Authority will review them along with local auto unions.

More than 4,000 autos already run in Zone One of the city and follow a queue system at stands.

Many drivers have worked for decades, and their views must be respected, he added. He also said every auto must use a working meter without fail.

MLA Yashpal Suvarna said services should match public demand and tourist needs, while protecting the livelihoods of long time drivers. He asked officials to improve basic facilities like shelters, drinking water, and toilets at auto stands.

Superintendent of Police Hariram Shankar said new app services must not disturb existing drivers. He warned that vehicles registered in other zones should not pick passengers inside city limits without approval. Color codes may be introduced to identify autos from different zones easily.

Officials also discussed giving new stand registrations after talks with the city corporation.

Representatives of driver unions, app companies, and transport officials attended the meeting and shared their concerns and suggestions for a fair system that balances technology growth with driver welfare and passenger safety in the city daily services.

HARMONY OVER INJUSTICE

Deputy Commissioner urges following Machideva's social teachings

GADAG

Deputy Commissioner C.N. Sridhar called upon people to follow the life lessons and social values taught by 12th century saint and poet Shri Madiwala Machideva. He spoke after inaugurating the district-level Madiwala Machideva Jayanti programme held at the District Administration Auditorium on Monday. The event was organised jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, and the Department of Kannada and Culture.

Sridhar said Madiwala Machideva was inspired by Jagajyoti Basavanna and worked for equality through his vachanas. He explained that Machideva opposed discrimination, injustice, and harmful social practices. His simple profession of washing clothes for devotees became a symbol of service, dignity of labour, and devotion. The Deputy Commissioner said the messages in his vachanas remain meaningful even today and can guide society toward harmony.

Guest speaker Sujatha Madiwalara, a teacher at Shirgumpi Government High School, spoke about the saint's life and background. She said he was born in Devara Hipparagi in present-day Vijayapura district to Paruvatayya and Sugnanavva. Kalyana was his main place of work and spiritual activity. She explained that he fought social evils like untouchability and superstition through powerful vachanas that promoted equality and moral living.

Elders from the community were felicitated during the programme. Several officials and dignitaries attended, including Urban Development Authority Chairman Akbarsab Babarji, Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr. Durgesh K.R., DySP Vidyadhara Nayaka, and Kannada and Culture Department Assistant Director Dr. Basavaraj Bellary. The programme began with the national anthem. Prof. Bahubali Jain compered the event and also delivered the vote of thanks. Organisers said such celebrations help younger generations understand reformers and carry forward messages of equality, service, and unity.

QUICK READ

Horticulture company fined ₹ 25,000 by Court

Chikkaballapur
The Chikkaballapur District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission fined Sri Amaranarayana Horticultural Products Company Rs. 25,000 for refusing to use a high credit card issued to its members. The complaint was filed by farmers Munirathnamma and Bhavyashree K.S. from Jogyanahalli, Chintamani taluk, under CC No. 30/2025 and 32/2025. After examining the case, Chairman Kumar N. and members H. Janardhan found a deficiency in service. The Commission ordered the company and Bank of Baroda to return the Rs. 25,000 fine and an additional Rs. 1,000 deposit to the complainants within the stipulated time. The decision reinforces consumer rights in the district.

Athlete incentive application deadline extended again

Chitradurga
The application period for incentives to athletes from Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities has been extended to February 10, 2026. The program rewards athletes who won medals in official sports events at international, national, or state levels during 2024. Earlier, the deadline was January 31, but authorities extended it to allow more eligible participants to apply. Interested athletes can submit applications online through the Seva Sindhu portal at sevasindhu.karnataka.gov.in. The initiative, announced by Assistant Director Sucheta M. Nelavagi, aims to encourage and support talented athletes from these communities, recognizing their achievements and providing financial assistance for their sports development

Free health camp benefits nomadic families in Chitradurga

Dr. Akshata's team tested 49 people for non-communicable diseases, diagnosing new cases, starting treatment, and providing medicines to 15 patients

CHITRADURGA

The government aims to provide free quality health services to the most vulnerable communities, including nomadic families, said Taluk Health Education Officer B. Moogappa.

He spoke at a free health checkup camp organized for families living near Medehalli, Malappanahatti, and Davangere Road in Chitradurga city. The event was held in collaboration with the Taluk Health Officer's Office and Vimukti Vidya Sangha Damma Kendra. Moogappa urged families to take full advantage of the camp and follow doctors' advice for treatment.

He also advised nomadic families to maintain cleanliness, eat hot and nutritious food, vaccinate children on time, and seek urgent help by calling 108 in emergencies.

During the camp, medical officer Dr. Akshata and her team conducted non-communicable disease tests on 49 people. Two individuals were newly diagnosed with high blood pressure and three with diabetes; treatment has begun. Medicines were also provided to 15 people with existing illnesses.

The program was attended by Annapurna, president of Vimukti Vidya Sangha; office bearers Bibijan and Nagaratna; director Vishwasagar; HIO Praveen Kumar; CHO Himbindu; leaders of the Sudugadu Sidda community Babanna, Vasanthi, and Gangajja; ASHA mentor Tabitha; ASHA worker Jyoti; and members of the nomadic community. The camp highlights government efforts to bring healthcare services directly to underserved communities, ensuring early diagnosis and treatment for better well-being.

Chitradurga sports school seeks young talented athletes

CHITRADURGA

The Veeravanite Onake Obavva Stadium Sports Residential School in Chitradurga is set to select talented boys and girls in volleyball and athletics for the 2026-27 academic year, officials said.

Selected students will receive free food, accommodation, and professional training from sports experts. The aim is to develop them into top athletes who can compete at state, national, and international events.

Eligibility is limited to children currently in class 4, aged 10 or 11 years as of June 1, 2026. Selection tests will assess physical strength, agility, endurance, dexterity, speed, and height. Candidates scoring more than 50% overall will be considered for admission based on merit.

District-level trials will be held from Feb 12 to 14 at Onake Obavva Stadium, 10 am onwards, for students who miss taluk-level selections. Participants must bring all relevant documents; no allowances will be provided by the department.

For details, contact the Assistant Director, Youth Services and Sports Department, Veeravanite Onake Obavva Stadium, Chitradurga at 08194-235635.

Eligibility is for class 4 children aged 10–11 by June 1, 2026; selection tests assess physical abilities, with admission for scores above 50%

Selections will be conducted across all taluks of the district. The schedule is as follows

- Feb 5 – Molakalmuru Government Pre-University College, 11 am
- Feb 6 – Challakere Taluk Stadium, 11 am
- Feb 7 – Holalkere Taluk Stadium, 11 am
- Feb 9 – Hosadurga Taluk Stadium, 11 am
- Feb 10 – Hiriyur Taluk Stadium, 11 am
- Feb 11 – Onake Obavva Stadium, 11 am

Chikkaballapur to host Employees Sports Meet celebration

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Chikkaballapur will host the District Level Government Employees Sports Meet and Cultural Programme on February 6 at Sir M.V. District Sports Hall at 11 am. The event is organized by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, and the Karnataka State Government Employees Association.

Higher Education Minister Dr. M.C. Sudhakar will inaugurate it, while MLA P.E. Pradeep Easwar will preside. MPs, MLAs, government officials, and association leaders will attend.

All district government employees and taluk presidents are expected to participate.

The event aims to promote sportsmanship, cultural unity, and employee engagement across Chikkaballapur.

During the program, Blue Volt partnered with SSIT College's Electrical and Electronics Department to enhance industry-academia collaboration

Discipline key to success, say experts to students

TUMAKURU

Students can achieve success in life only by adopting discipline and working steadily toward their goals, said Dr. K.B. Lingegowda, Vice Chancellor of Sahe University.

He spoke after inaugurating a 15-day workshop organized by the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering at GP Nexus, Sri Siddhartha Technical College. Dr. Lingegowda advised students to meet their parents' expectations and maintain their trust while improving their skills during the learning stage.

Later, Nagaraju, Managing Director of Blue Volt, emphasized the importance of skill development. He said technically skilled diploma students are no less capable than engineering students and encouraged them to face challenges confidently and learn something new every day.

During the program, Blue Volt signed an agreement with the Electrical and Electronics Department of SSIT College to strengthen industry-academia collaboration.

The workshop was attended by Principal Dr. Mahantesh M. Nadakatti, Advisor to the Chancellor Dr. Vivek Veeraiah, Academic Dean Dr. S. Renukalatha, Professor Thyagaraju of HMS College, Head of Electrical and Electronics Department Dr. Praveen, Assistant Professor Dr. Yoganand, Coordinator Dr. Venugopal Chauhan, Placement Officer Dr. Harish, and several diploma students.

The event highlighted the role of discipline, continuous learning, and skill-building in shaping students' future careers while fostering confidence and practical knowledge to meet industry standards effectively.

Request made for mosque grants in Srinivaspur

SRINIVASPUR

Former Vice-President of Srinivaspur Town Municipal Council, Ayesha Nayaz, has appealed to the Karnataka State Waqf Board for financial help to improve several mosques in the town. She submitted a written request asking for funds for repair work, maintenance, and basic facilities. The appeal was handed over to Dr Maazuddin Khan, Chief Executive Officer of the Karnataka State Waqf Board, during his recent visit to Srinivaspur. He had come to attend a cricket tournament held at the Jamia Masjid Eidgah ground. The event was organised for madrasa students linked to the Waqf Board–managed Jamia Masjid. Dr Khan encouraged the students and distributed prizes to the winners.

In her letter, Nayaz sought grants for Jamia Masjid, Charminar Masjid, Khan Sab Masjid, Sofia Masjid, Noorani Masjid, and the Srinivaspur Dargah. She also requested support for other registered Waqf mosques in the town. She explained that mosques are not only places of prayer but also important centres for social and cultural gatherings. Because of this, she said, proper maintenance and development are necessary.

Nayaz urged the Waqf Board to release funds under its existing schemes and rules. She said many mosques need urgent attention, including repairs to buildings, water supply, sanitation, and other basic infrastructure.

Several local leaders and community members were present during the visit. Among them were former IPS officer Abdul Khader, Srinivaspur Dargah Committee president Mohammed Chan Pasha, Iqbal Pasha, and Babu. The gathering highlighted the community's hope that the Waqf Board will respond positively to the request. Residents said timely support would help preserve religious spaces and improve facilities for daily prayers, festivals, and community welfare activities in town.

Dr Nadakatti takes charge as SSIT principal

TUMAKURU

Dr. Mahantesh M. Nadakatti has officially taken charge as the new Principal of Sri Siddhartha Institute of Technology (SSIT) in Tumakuru. A simple handover ceremony was held at the campus where outgoing Principal Dr. M.S. Raviprakash formally transferred responsibilities. Registrar Dr. Ashok Mehta and Chancellor's Advisor Dr. Vivek Veeraiah were present during the event.

Originally from Dharwad, Dr. Nadakatti studied in Belagavi, Dharwad, and Mysuru. He brings over 25 years of teaching and research experience in mechanical engineering in India and abroad, including post-doctoral work in Sweden.

After assuming office, he said it was an honour to lead one of the state's top engineering institutions. He emphasized providing quality education, promoting practical research, and fostering innovation. His goal is to build a strong learning environment, encourage creativity, and establish global partnerships for the institute.

Dr. Nadakatti has published 59 research papers, including 57 in international journals, focusing on high-speed rail systems and metro technologies in collaboration with universities in China and Europe. He has presented research and delivered keynote talks in countries like China, Oman, Finland, Sweden, and Iran.

He has also contributed to environmental and industrial projects, including safe disposal of floating waste and development of cost-effective industrial lubricants. College authorities expressed confidence that his leadership will strengthen academics, research, and industry collaboration while opening new opportunities for students in innovation, internships, and global learning.

Women entrepreneurs invited to join Grihalakshmi App

CHITRADURGA

The Grihalakshmi Digital Marketing App has been launched to help women entrepreneurs reach better markets for their products, officials. Deputy Director of the Women and Child Development Department urged eligible women in the district to register their names in the app, which was launched on January 9, 2026. The platform aims to connect women producers with buyers and improve visibility for their products.

Women from various backgrounds are eligible to register, including members of Stree Shakti Self-Help Groups, NRLM beneficiaries and entrepreneurs, women running Akka Cafe units, Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association entrepreneurs, self-employed women trained through RUDSET, and beneficiaries of other government schemes at district, taluk, or gram panchayat levels.

Interested women entrepreneurs are asked to contact the Women Development Inspector at the Office of the Deputy Director of Women and Child Development, located at District Balabhavan near the stadium in Chitradurga. They must provide details about themselves and the products they manufacture to complete the registration process.

The department said the initiative will provide greater market opportunities and business growth for women, empowering them to expand their enterprises. For further information, women can call 7019967954 to clarify queries and ensure successful registration on the Grihalakshmi Digital Marketing App.

Gas leak sparks fire, family of 3 dies

RAMANAGARA

A tragic fire accident in Kanakapura claimed the lives of three family members after a gas leak while cooking, officials reported. The deceased have been identified as Siddharaju (55), Chandramma (50), and their son Prashanth (22). The accident occurred four days ago in the Amarnarayana block of Kanakapura city.

The injured family members were admitted to Victoria Hospital, Bengaluru, for treatment, but unfortunately, all three succumbed to their injuries despite medical care.

The incident falls under the jurisdiction of the Kanakapura Town Police Station, and authorities are investigating the cause of the gas leak. Relatives and local residents expressed deep sorrow and mourned the loss of the father, mother, and son.

The fire has raised concerns about kitchen safety and gas cylinder handling in homes, prompting officials to urge residents to take precautions and ensure proper installation and maintenance of gas connections to prevent similar tragedies.

No further casualties were reported, and the local administration is coordinating with police to provide support to the grieving family and spread awareness about household fire safety.

YOUTH AGAINST DRUGS

Say no to drugs, choose bright future

GADAG

Youth is the time of dreams, efforts, and building a bright future. But today, some young people are straying from the right path and falling into the trap of drug addiction.

Drugs may seem attractive at first, but they destroy the mind, erode values, and ruin lives. Even a moment of curiosity can lead to lifelong damage, and a small taste can wipe out happiness. This stark reality was shown through the powerful paintings of Dr. Nanda Hanabaratti, Deputy Director of the Social Welfare Department. His artworks depict the dark grip of drugs using symbols like syringes, pills, and shadowy hands, sending a strong message: "Say No To Drugs."

Dr. Hanabaratti's paintings are more than art; they are a warning. Addiction does not just harm the individual but also shatters family dreams and weakens society. Youth are the strength of the nation. If they fall into drugs, the country's future fades. But awareness and discipline can guide them toward success.

Parents are urged to lead with love, teachers to guide with discipline, and society to cooperate in building strong, value-based youth. Together, it is possible to fight the drug menace. Deputy Commissioner C.N. Sridhar said awareness campaigns are being carried out in collaboration with the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, District Legal Services Authority, and police. "Success is possible only with public support," he added. District Superintendent of Police Rohan Jagadish emphasized that along with legal action, family care and community support are crucial to saving the youth.

Through awareness, guidance, and community effort, the youth can resist drugs, preserve their values, and build a brighter future.

QUICK READ

TVK Entry Energises 2026 Tamil Nadu Polls

Chennai

Actor-turned-politician Vijay on Monday urged cadres of Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) to prepare strongly for the 2026 Assembly elections. He said the party's entry has created excitement across Tamil Nadu and given new energy to the political scene. Vijay asked party members to work with unity and determination to win the trust of people. He said the goal is to gain recognition and take responsibility in governance. TVK was officially launched on February 2, 2024.

Sreedharan Pushes Kerala High-Speed Rail Plan Ahead

Malappuram

Metroman E Sreedharan on Monday began work on Kerala's proposed high-speed rail project by opening an office in Ponnani. The move comes even though the project was not mentioned in the Union Budget. His wife Radha inaugurated the office. Sreedharan said the office will help explain the project and hear public concerns. Public meetings will start from February 15. Fieldwork will begin in April for finalising route and stations. He said work will move fast before monsoon.

Jaishankar to Attend US Critical Minerals Ministerial Talks Week

EAM S Jaishankar will visit the United States for key talks on minerals

NEW DELHI

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the visit will take place from February two to four. Jaishankar will attend the Critical Minerals Ministerial called by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The meeting will focus on strong supply chains, clean energy change, and cooperation on key minerals. During the visit, the minister will also meet senior members of the United States administration.

The United States said the first ministerial will bring partners from around the world together. The aim is to build safe and steady mineral supply chains needed for growth and security. Officials said these minerals support national safety, new technology, and the move to clean energy.

Similar talks were held earlier when the US Treasury hosted a finance meeting in Washington. Finance ministers from many countries discussed ways to widen and protect mineral supply networks. India was represented there by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, who handles railways and technology.

India and the United States are also in touch on defence cooperation and military industry ties. A US Congressional team led by Mike Rogers met Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh. The talks covered stronger defence industry links and recent long term partnership agreements. Officials said such meetings show growing trust and wider cooperation between the two democratic nations. The mineral talks are expected to support India's clean energy plans and future industries. Experts believe closer work with partners will reduce risks, cut delays, and improve global supplies.

Overall, the visit highlights shared goals, steady dialogue, and practical steps as India and the United States work together on minerals, defence links, energy security, and long term cooperation across government, industry, and people, while building trust for future economic and strategic stability for both nations.

Centre Raises K'taka Tax Share, Joshi Says

NEW DELHI

Union minister says revised tax sharing gives Karnataka more funds, rejecting Congress charges of neglect in the latest Union Budget

The Central government has increased Karnataka's share in central taxes, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Monday, rejecting claims by the state Congress leadership. Speaking in New Delhi, Joshi said Karnataka's share has risen from 3.647 per cent to 4.131 per cent under the revised tax distribution formula. He said this change would bring the state several thousand crore rupees in additional revenue during the coming financial year.

According to the Union Budget for 2026–27, Karnataka has been allocated Rs 63,049 crore as its share of central taxes. Joshi said this amount is higher than what the state received in the previous year. He stressed that the Centre has not discriminated against Karnataka and that the revised share reflects recommendations of the 16th Finance Commission.

The minister explained that the overall tax devolution to states remains unchanged at 41 per cent. However, individual state shares have been adjusted based on updated criteria, which resulted in Karnataka receiving a higher proportion. He said allegations of injustice were politically motivated and ignored official figures.

Joshi welcomed the 2026–27 Union Budget, saying it aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Viksit Bharat vision and promotes growth across seven sectors. He said the Rs 10,000 crore allocation for biopharma would strengthen healthcare innovation. In contrast, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah termed the budget disappointing, citing reduced funds for central schemes and limited gains from rail projects. Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar also said Karnataka received no real benefits, underlining Centre–state differences on funding and development priorities.

AIMJ Chief Condemns Attacks On Kashmiri Shawl Sellers

BAREILLY

All India Muslim Jamaat (AIMJ) National President Maulana Shahabuddin Razvi on Monday condemned recent attacks on Kashmiri shawl sellers in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, accusing state governments of failing to protect migrant traders.

His remarks came after two Kashmiri brothers were assaulted in Dehradun, while another trader, Mohd Ramzan, was allegedly harassed in Kangra district. Razvi said such incidents reflect rising intolerance and administrative negligence.

Referring to an attack on a shopkeeper in Haridwar, he alleged that antisocial elements attempted to drive him away, creating communal divisions. He also criticised the Congress-led Himachal Pradesh government over law and order and said madrasas in Uttar Pradesh would cooperate with official inspections.

The Pennaiyar river dispute highlights interstate tensions, legal processes, and efforts to ensure fairness and cooperation

SC Orders Tribunal For Pennaiyar River Water Dispute

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has stepped in to resolve a long-running water sharing dispute between two southern states. On Monday, the apex court directed the Union government to set up an inter-State river water disputes tribunal within one month. The bench of Justices Vikram Nath and N V Anjaria ordered the Centre to issue a notification in the Official Gazette and refer Tamil Nadu's complaint to the tribunal under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.

The dispute relates to sharing of waters of the Pennaiyar river system, also known as Dakshina Pinakini, between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The court said there was no reason to delay the formation of a tribunal to decide the issue.

Tamil Nadu had approached the Supreme Court alleging that projects planned and carried out by Karnataka in the upper reaches of the river would harm its downstream interests.

These include works on the Markandeya Nadhi and pumping of water from tanks and directly from the river.

The state said such actions could affect farmers, drinking water supply, and livelihoods in several districts. It also claimed that repeated talks and meetings between the two states had failed to settle the dispute.

Tamil Nadu urged the court to restrain Karnataka from constructing a dam near Yargol and launching new Pennaiyar basin projects until resolution.

The Centre earlier advised dialogue, but law mandates tribunal jurisdiction. This directive aims to ensure clarity, fairness, and timely settlement of the long-pending water-sharing conflict, safeguarding farming and urban communities in both states.

Dense Fog, Moderate Air Quality Greets Delhi

NEW DELHI

Delhi woke up to dense fog on Monday morning, reducing visibility to 100 metres at Palam and Safdarjung, the weather office said. Air quality showed slight improvement, with the average Air Quality Index at 188, falling in the moderate category. Out of monitoring stations, 21 reported moderate air quality, while 16 recorded poor levels. Lodhi Road showed the lowest AQI at 116. Temperatures remained mild, with minimum readings around 10 to 11 degrees Celsius across the city.

SC Grants Bail In Pune Porsche Blood Tampering Case

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to three people accused of tampering with blood samples in the high-profile Pune Porsche hit-and-run case.

A bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan ordered the release of Ashish Satish Mittal, Aditya Avinash Sood, and Amar Santhosh Gaikwad. The bench noted that the accused had been in jail for nearly twenty months and directed that their release follow conditions set by the trial court.

The three are alleged to have swapped blood samples of two minor passengers in the Porsche, who were reportedly under the influence of alcohol at the time of the accident. They face charges including forgery, evidence tampering, and bribery under the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The crash, which occurred on May 19, 2024, killed two IT professionals, Anis Awadhiya and Ashwini Koshta, in Pune's Kalyaninagar area.

The car was allegedly driven by a seventeen-year-old under the influence of alcohol. Mittal is a friend of one minor's father, Sood is the father of the other minor, and Gaikwad allegedly received Rs 3 lakh to facilitate the blood sample swap.

While granting bail, the court highlighted parental responsibility, noting that handing vehicles to minors and enabling reckless behaviour reflects a broader social problem.

Teacher Aspirants Protest In Lucknow Ahead Supreme Court Hearing

LUCKNOW

Candidates linked to the long pending 69,000 teacher recruitment case staged a protest in Lucknow on Monday seeking early justice.

The protest was held outside the residence of Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya ahead of the upcoming Supreme Court hearing. Aspirants alleged serious irregularities in the recruitment process and long delays in issuing appointment letters even after they cleared the examination. Raising slogans and holding placards, protesters appealed to Maurya and Minister of State for Basic Education Sandeep Singh to intervene. They pointed out that Maurya belongs to the OBC community and urged him to support candidates from backward sections waiting for employment.

Several aspirants said they have waited for years despite meeting all eligibility conditions. They said the uncertainty has damaged their careers and affected family responsibilities. One candidate said clearing the exam brought hope, but the delay has left many jobless and stressed.

Another protester, Manoj Yadav, said repeated hearing dates have passed without progress. He claimed that nearly twenty eight dates have gone by and the government has failed to present its case properly. He added that the absence of strong representation has deepened their disappointment.

The protesters urged the state government to act responsibly and ensure deserving candidates are not denied jobs. They said repeated promises from authorities have not resulted in any real solution.

Heavy police presence was seen during the protest to maintain order. Some protesters were briefly detained as a precaution, though the demonstration remained peaceful. The recruitment issue has seen multiple legal challenges over evaluation and reservation rules.

Indore Must Speak Louder Over Contaminated Water Deaths Issue

INDORE

Congress leader Jitu Patwari on Monday urged Indore residents to raise their voice over contaminated water deaths and demand accountability. He said people should stand in solidarity with families of victims from Bhagirathpura and question civic authorities and elected representatives.

In a video message, the Madhya Pradesh Congress president claimed that thirty two people have died due to contaminated water in Bhagirathpura. He said another patient, Anil Kushwaha, died on Monday morning at a private hospital, taking the toll to thirty two. Patwari alleged that the Indore Municipal Corporation and district administration failed to ensure safe drinking water in several localities. Calling the situation alarming, Patwari said silence from the city was troubling despite the deaths. He said the Congress, as the opposition, has consistently raised the issue and appealed to citizens to speak out for their right to clean water.

Patwari announced that the Congress will hold a peaceful protest with public participation near Rajwada palace. He said the protest aims to highlight the BJP government's failure to fix responsibility for the tragedy.

The state government and district administration, which are monitoring affected patients, have not issued a fresh official statement on the latest death. The matter is currently before the Indore bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

During a hearing on January twenty seven, the court appointed former judge Justice Sushil Kumar Gupta as a one member inquiry commission. The court observed that the incident raised serious concerns related to the constitutional right to life. It also noted disputes over actual implementation of safety measures. State responded.

Delhi HC Orders Survey Of Buildings Near Heritage Sites

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday directed a thorough survey of all buildings near the city's notified heritage sites to ensure compliance with sanctioned plans and norms. A Division Bench of Justices Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Tejas Karia set a three-month deadline for the exercise.

The court was hearing a batch of writ petitions highlighting violations near heritage structures. Petitioners argued that constructions close to heritage buildings often alter their visual and structural character, causing defacement. They also claimed that the Municipal Corporation of Delhi frequently approves building plans without following bye-laws or the Heritage Conservation Committee's recommendations.

The Bench ordered the municipal body to carry out a physical survey of all buildings in the vicinity of heritage properties. Each survey team must include one officer nominated by the Heritage Conservation Committee to ensure proper oversight. Separate reports for each heritage property must be prepared and submitted to the court. Copies of the reports must also be shared with the petitioners' counsel, who can respond before the next hearing.

The court clarified that "heritage buildings/structures/properties" in its order refers only to properties officially listed in heritage notifications.

BOTTLE BUYBACK

Tasmac Revives Empty Bottle Buy Back Scheme

CHENNAI

After being temporarily put on hold amid protests by shop workers, the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Corporation, or Tasmac, will restart its empty liquor bottle buy back scheme in Chennai later this week.

Officials said the decision follows a review of earlier problems and is aimed at making the process smoother this time.

The scheme was earlier stopped after Tasmac workers closed liquor shops and protested at depots, saying they lacked facilities and faced extra work.

The Madras High Court has asked Tasmac to submit a status report by the end of February, even as plans move ahead.

A senior official said the earlier attempt failed because the scheme was launched across the city at once, causing confusion.

This time, it will be introduced in phases and will cover all city zones within a week.

Under the scheme, buyers pay ten rupees extra for each bottle and get the money back when they return the empty bottle.

The plan is already working in other parts of Tamil Nadu and was first started in hill areas to protect wildlife from glass waste.

Workers continue to oppose it, saying staff strength and storage space are not enough, and want a separate agency to handle bottles.

Union leader Dhanasekaran said their demands remain unchanged and warned that the workload will rise without proper support.

Tasmac officials said the phased return may reduce problems, but the balance between green goals and worker concerns will be closely watched.

The coming days will show whether the scheme can run smoothly in Chennai without fresh protests or further legal hurdles from workers and public across the city.

India To Join 2026 Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting

The meeting, chaired by Fiji's Siromi Turaga, will address law, climate, digital change, and include diverse youth and advocacy perspectives

NEW DELHI

India will participate in the 2026 Commonwealth Law Ministers Meeting in Nadi, Fiji, from February 9 to 12, officials said. The three-day meeting brings together ministers and attorneys general from across the Commonwealth to discuss strengthening legal systems and promoting the rule of law globally.

The discussions will focus on ensuring access to justice, protecting democratic rights, supporting fair economies, and safeguarding communities against environmental and social challenges. The ministers are expected to adopt practical measures to strengthen legal institutions and uphold justice. Commonwealth Secretary-General Shirley Botchwey thanked Fiji for hosting the event, emphasizing that the rule of law is essential for peace, stability, and development. "Where it is weakened, ordinary people feel the impact most sharply. We must work together to uphold it as a protection for all," she said.

The meeting will be chaired by Siromi Turaga, Fiji's Minister for Justice and acting Attorney General, under the theme "Anchoring Justice in a Changing Tide: Strengthening the Rule of Law for a Resilient Future." Turaga highlighted challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, and regional cooperation, noting the need for flexible, inclusive, and resilient legal systems.

Alongside ministerial discussions, five side events will include youth leaders, justice system beneficiaries, and disability rights advocates, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered. Outcomes of the meeting are expected to inform the agenda of the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Antigua and Barbuda later this year.

Officials said India's participation underscores its commitment to the rule of law, justice, and international cooperation, while also contributing to discussions on resilient legal systems for a rapidly changing world.

QUICK READ

Supreme Court Grants Bail In Pune Crash Case

Pune

The Supreme Court on Monday granted bail to three accused in the 2024 Pune Porsche crash that killed two people. The court blamed parents for giving children car keys and money for parties. The 17-year-old driver, under alcohol influence, hit two IT professionals in Kalyani Nagar last May. The accused include Amar Gaikwad, Aditya Sood, and Ashish Mittal. Earlier, their bail pleas were rejected by the high court. The juvenile involved was sent to an observation home but later released.

Bombs, Firing Reported In South Kolkata Clash

Kolkata

Bombs were thrown and bullets fired during a clash in south Kolkata's Golpark area on Sunday night, leaving two injured. Police arrested 10 people and are searching for others involved. The fight began when outsiders entered the locality and were confronted by residents. Stones and crude bombs were exchanged, and a mob vandalised motorcycles and tried attacking a police vehicle. CCTV footage is being checked, and police said the violence seemed aimed at controlling the area. Investigation is ongoing.

Two Killed In Haridwar Ravidas Shobhayatra Clash

Roorkee

Two people were killed and three seriously injured in a clash during the Ravidas Shobhayatra in Binarasi village, Haridwar, on Sunday. Police said the violence erupted around 5 pm over a long-standing rivalry and issues of social prestige. What began as a verbal argument escalated, and firearms were allegedly used. Following the incident, heavy security from nearby police stations was deployed to prevent further unrest. Authorities are investigating the cause and working to restore peace in the area.

CBI Launches Operation CyStrike Against Fraud

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) launched Operation CyStrike on January 30 in collaboration with law enforcement agencies from the USA, UK, Kuwait, Ireland, and Singapore. The operation aimed to dismantle transnational cyber-enabled financial crime networks operating from India and abroad.

As part of the crackdown, the CBI conducted searches at 35 locations across New Delhi, Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Telangana, and West Bengal. The raids led to the exposure and disruption of cyber-crime networks that defrauded victims in the USA, UK, Kuwait, Ireland, Singapore, and India by using fake online identities. Investigators seized laptops, mobile phones, hard disks, and other electronic devices containing crucial digital evidence. During the operations, key operative Pfokrehrii Peter was arrested.

Another fraudulent network operating from New Delhi, Ghaziabad, and Karnataka was busted under the domain https://eservicemoi-Kw.com. This group falsely offered Kuwaiti e-visas and job appointments to Indian nationals in exchange for money. Investigators recovered cash totaling Rs 60 lakh along with devices containing fake documents.

The operation also uncovered and disabled multiple mule accounts used to transfer the proceeds of crime from foreign victims to the accused. Networks defrauding individuals in the UK, Ireland, and Singapore were dismantled, delivering a major blow to international cyber-fraud activities.

Led by the CBI with support from INTERPOL and other global agencies, Operation CyStrike underscores India's determination to combat organized, technology-enabled crime. Officials said the initiative not only disrupted major cyber-fraud networks but also reinforced measures to hold perpetrators accountable, sending a strong message about India's commitment to fighting transnational financial crimes.

PV Anvar Confirmed As UDF Beypore Candidate

KOZHIKODE

The United Democratic Front (UDF) will field Trinamool Congress leader P V Anvar as its candidate from the Beypore constituency in Kozhikode, KPCC president Sunny Joseph confirmed on Monday. Anvar, a former LDF MLA, resigned from the Assembly after leaving the Left Front and later joined the Trinamool Congress, now an associate party of the UDF. Anvar has been active in Beypore in recent weeks amid speculation that he would contest against Tourism Minister P A Mohamed Riyas, son-in-law of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, in the upcoming Assembly polls. Joseph said, "He will come out victorious and become the Beypore MLA," confirming Anvar's nomination.

On Monday, Anvar visited Chaliyam harbour and interacted with local fishermen and traders. Asked about his candidature, he did not give a definite answer, saying, "Someone will have to contest. It will be decided later. Let us see."

Anvar criticised Riyas for failing to address local issues, adding, "He is in the kick of being the son-in-law. I have no personal issue with him; my issue is with his actions." He further alleged that the CPI(M) and the government were dominated by a family, leaving local party workers sidelined.

He also questioned the LDF's statewide development rally, claiming, "If development has really happened, then why such a rally? It is a fraud." The CPI(M) and LDF have not responded to Anvar's remarks.

Earlier, Anvar had represented the Nilambur constituency in Malappuram district. He is now shifting focus to Beypore, while the UDF is expected to finalise candidates and seat-sharing arrangements in the coming weeks.

Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini Meets Modi

NEW DELHI

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday to discuss several important issues concerning the state and the nation. The Prime Minister's Office shared the meeting on social media, confirming the interaction.

A day earlier, Saini welcomed the Union Budget 2026-27, calling it people-focused and aligned with Modi's vision for a developed India by 2047. Speaking in Panchkula, he described the budget as "visionary and historic," highlighting its dedication to uplifting the poorest and fostering inclusive growth. He said the budget's three main pillars are speed, capacity, and inclusive development.

The Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, presented the ninth consecutive Union Budget in Lok Sabha on Sunday. Key highlights include an increase in public capital expenditure to ₹12.2 lakh crore, seven high-speed rail corridors, new freight corridors, and operationalisation of 20 national waterways to support sustainable transport.

On taxation, the New Income Tax Act, 2025, will take effect from April 2026 with simplified rules and redesigned forms. Tax Collected at Source (TCS) rates will also be reduced for overseas tour packages, education, and medical expenses under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme.

Saini said the budget reflects the government's resolve for Viksit Bharat and called the day "glorious," coinciding with Guru Ravidas Jayanti. He praised Modi's vision, stating the budget will serve as a milestone in achieving a developed India by 2047.

Calcutta HC Directs Police To Ensure Opposition Leaders' Security

KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Monday directed West Bengal Police and Kolkata Police to provide full security for public political events of opposition leaders, including BJP legislators and Union ministers.

A division bench of Chief Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Partha Sarathi Sen issued the order after hearing a petition from Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari. He sought court intervention to ensure that opposition political programmes are not disrupted by alleged hostility from ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) activists. The court instructed the police to strictly follow the directive until February 18, the next hearing date. Adhikari alleged that BJP leaders' public programmes often face violence, attacks, and resistance despite giving prior notice to authorities. He added that these incidents show police and administrative failure in maintaining law and order since the 2021 Assembly elections.

Adhikari's own convoy has reportedly faced multiple attacks since 2021, prompting the Union Home Ministry to upgrade his security. Last year, BJP MP Khagen Murmu and West Bengal Assembly BJP chief whip Sankar Ghosh were also attacked during public programmes and required hospitalisation due to injuries. The division bench's order emphasises the responsibility of the state and city police to ensure safe conduct of political events for opposition leaders and prevent harassment or violence, maintaining democratic norms in public political activities.

Cong Attacks KTR Over KCR SIT Interrogation

HYDERABAD

Congress leader Mota Rohit questioned BRS Working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) over Telangana Jagruthi President Kavitha's claims that her husband's phone was allegedly tapped during the BRS tenure. The comments follow KTR's political defense of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) questioning of BRS Chief K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) in the phone-tapping case.

Kavitha expressed confidence in the inquiry, urging patience for the probe results. "KCR garu was summoned and answered to the best of his knowledge. Let us see the outcome," she said.

KTR, however, launched a strong attack on the Congress-led state government, describing its two-year tenure in three words: Diversion, Subversion, Perversion. He accused the administration of spreading rumours, selective leaks, and diverting public attention from governance failures. He claimed the SIT had not strictly followed legal procedures but praised KCR for voluntarily cooperating with the probe, despite no legal obligation to appear in person.

According to KTR, the inquiry confirmed that no wrongdoing occurred during the BRS government. He urged the media not to rely on unofficial leaks, warning that attempts to malign KCR would "fall back on those who attempt it."

AFFIDAVIT

I, ROFIK MOLLA, S/o. Late. Abdul Rahim Molla, aged 60 years, residing at Olipur Rojapara Dakshin, Olipur Nayanagar, Olipur, Haripal, Hooghly-712301, West Bengal, camp at Bangalore, declare that ROFIK MOLLA, SHEIKH RAFIKUL MOLLA and ROFIK SHEIKH, Both the names are belongs to one and the same person i.e., myself only. And continue my name in future ROFIK MOLLA, Vide Affidavit Dated: 30.01.2026 before notary V. RAJASHEKHARA, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **MUZAMIL SHAIK I**, S/o Ibrahim, resident of No 6, 8th Cross, Near Kalyani Bekary, Anepalya Po, Adugodi, Bengaluru-560030, have changed my name to **MUZAMIL SHAIK**, vide affidavit dated: 30.01.2026, before Notary MEER HASSAN, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, **IMTHIAZ PASHA**, S/o Syed Ahmed, resident of No. 12, 4th Cross, Damodar Mudaliar Street, Ulsoor, Bengaluru-560008, have changed my name to **SYED IMTIYAZ AHMED**, vide affidavit dated: 02.02.2026, before Notary MEER HASSAN, Bangalore.

NAME CHANGE

I, **FRAHANA,** w/o MUJEEBULLA J. aged about 48 years, R/at: Near Stella Convent, Mytri Kuta Road, V.V.Puram, Gouribidnur, Chickballapur Disrict, have Changed my name **FARHANA MUJEEB to FARHANA,** Vide affidavit Dated: 02-02-2026 before Notary, K.H.Venkatappa, Advocate & Notary, Govt. of Karnataka, Chickballapura.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SURAIYA BEGUM**, W/o, Mohammed Anwar Sharif, Resident of Ward No 14, Ashokanagar Pete Malavalli Town Malavalli Mandya Dist, 571430, have changed my name to **SURAIYA BANU**, vide affidavit dated: 02.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact:
080-41209042

NAME CHANGE

I, **SAMIRA BANU**, W/o, Mohammed Mazhar Ahmed, Resident of No 55, Near Masjid Nalbandwadi Ramanagar Dist, 571511, have changed my name to **SAMEERA BANU**, vide affidavit dated: 02.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **SAKEENAABI**, W/o, Syed Umar, Resident of No 42,1st Cross 2nd Stage Near Novman Masjid Rajiv Nagar Mysuru Dist, 570019, have changed my name to **SAKINA BI**, vide affidavit dated: 02.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

I **Sanjana R Rajpal** aged about 21 years, D/o Rajesh R Rajpal ,No.12, Flat No. 002, Naksha Prime Square, 2nd Floor, 3rd Cross, Swasti Main Road, Lakshmi Road Cross, Shanti Nagar, P O Wilson Garden, Bangalore-560027.

I wish to inform you that my name has been changed from **SANJANA R RAJPAL** to **SANJANA RAJESH RAJPAL** and the said names belongs to one & the same person. Affidavit dated 11th January 2026, before Notary **Smt. Hemalatha. P**

Government of Karnataka
BENGALURU URBAN ZILLA PANCHAYAT
O/o Executive Engineer, Rural Drinking Water & Sanitation Division, First Floor, Zilla Panchayat Building, S. Kariyappa Road, Banashankari (Near Banashankari Temple) Bengaluru-560070.

No.EE/RDW&SD/BNG(U)/TND/16/2025-26/1521 Date: 31.01.2026

Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Tender Notice (Short Term)

Tenders are invited through Karnataka Public procurement portal for the Goods approved Under Support Activity Head of grants for the year 2025-26 Under Two Cover System. The Tender Documents can be obtained and submitted on or before **09.01.2026 up to 4.00 pm**. For further details contact the above address during office hours or visit **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-Executive Engineer, RDW&S Division, Bengaluru Urban Dist, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/Shirdi Sai/5370/2025-26

TOWN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, SEDAM.
Near State Bank of India, Sedam-585222, Dist : Kalaburagi, State : Karnataka
WebSite: www.sedamtown.mrc.gov.in Phone: 08441-277912-276932

NO:TMC-SEDAM/AMRUT2.0/2025-26 Date: 30.01.2026

:: TENDER NOTIFICATION ::

The Chief Officer TMC Sedam, Dist-Kalaburagi, Karnataka Invites Tenders Under AMRUT-2.O (Green Space and Parks) and MF-2025-26 Through **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** KPP Portal as per the KTPP Act 2000 from Eligible Registered contractors

1) Works/Goods/Service Details: 1. DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT47627/CALL-4-Others, 2. DMA/2025-26/SE7183-Others, 3. DMA/2025-26/EL/WORK_INDENT54750-Others 2) Head of Account: **AMRUT-2.O (Green Space and Parks) and MF -2025-26**, 3) Works/Goods/Service Estimated Cost: **Rs. 8.60 to 105.18 Lakhs,** 4) Contractors/Agency/Suppliers Edibility: Eligible Registered contractors, 5) Works/Goods/Service Tender Cost: **Rs. 8.60 to 105.18 Lakhs,** 6) Last date for applying the tender: **17.02.2026 Evening 17.00 Hours**, 7) Tenders Opening Date: **19.02.2026 Morning 11.00 Hours,** (Financial Bid Opening As per kpp portal), 8) Office Address and Contact Details: Town Municipal Council Sedam- 7892152625

Sd/- Chief Officer TMC Sedam

DIPR/Kalaburagi/1038/KSMC&A/2025-26

VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAMA LIMITED
(Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
Office of the Executive Engineer VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division, No.1 Sakaleshpur - 573134 Ph: 08173-244454, e-mail: eeypdn1@gmail.com

Tender Notification No: EE/YP/VJNL/DIV-01/TN-07 (Call-2)/2025-26/1691 Dated: 30.01.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO - 07(Call-2)/2025-26 Dated:30.01.2026 Ref: VJNL/YP/EE/D1/SKP/TND-07/2025-26/651 Dated: 22.08.2025 SHORT TERMTENDER NOTIFICATION (TWO TENDER DOCUMENT SYSTEM) (Only through kppp portal system)

"Percentage" tenders through kpppportal for 04 worksCall-2 are invited by the Executive Engineer, VJNL, YP Division, No.1, Sakaleshapura on behalf of Managing Director, VisvesvarayaJalaNigama Ltd., Registered office, Bangalore from thePWD registered eligible contractors who fulfill the pre-qualification conditions as per the published bid documents for the work. The amount put to tender varies from Rs. 253.20 Lakhs to Rs. 352.50 Lakhs. The contractors can download and submit the completed bid documents for as per the Calendar of events mentioned below.

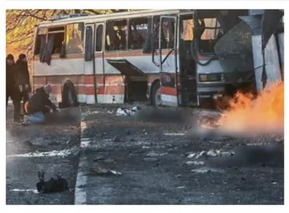
Sl No	Sl No of works as per Tender Notification	Indent No's of works	The bidder can access & download the tender documents	Last date of Submission of completed Tender Documents	Date & Time of Opening of Technical Bid
1	01 to 04	402 (Call-2), 422 (Call-2), 423 (Call-2) & 407 (Call-2)	03.02.2026 to 11.02.2026, up to 5.30 pm	11.02.2026, 5.30 pm	13.02.2026, 11.00 Am

The technical bid (Cover-I) will be opened at the office of the Executive Engineer, VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division, No.1, Sakaleshapura through kppp portal.Details such as Amount put to tender/EMD amount/Qualification of bidders/ Tender Conditions etc can be obtained through kppp portalhttps://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/#/portal/portal-home. Financial bids will be opened after Technical bid approval or on the date specified in the kppp portal, whichever is later. The authority competent to accept the tenders shall have the right of rejecting all or any of the tenders without assigning any reasons and will not be bound to accept the lowest tender. Corrigendum/addendum will be published in the kpppportal for all modifications or corrections if any. Any further information required may be obtained from the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/-Executive Engineer, VJNL, YP Division, No.1, Sakaleshpura

ವಾಸಾಸಂ/ಹಿಸನಿ/ಹಾಸನ/1010/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

QUICK READ



Russian Drone Strike on Miners' Bus Kills at Least 12 in Ukraine

Moscow

At least 12 people were killed on Sunday when a Russian drone struck a bus transporting miners in Ukraine's southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region, marking one of the deadliest recent attacks on civilian workers linked to the country's energy sector. Ukrainian officials said the bus was targeted in what they described as a deliberate strike on non-combatants. Ukraine's energy minister, Denys Shmyhal, condemned the attack in a statement posted on Telegram. Today, the enemy carried out a cynical and targeted attack on energy sector workers in the Dnipro region, he said, using language that underscored Kyiv's view that the strike was intentional and aimed at undermining critical infrastructure and morale. Local authorities said the bus was carrying miners to or from their workplace when it was hit by the drone.

Peter Mandelson Quits Labour Party Amid Scrutiny Over Epstein

New York

Peter Mandelson, the United Kingdom's former ambassador to the United States, has resigned from Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour Party following renewed media scrutiny over his past links to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, according to reports published by British media on Sunday. Mandelson, a veteran political figure and senior member of the Labour Party, was removed from his role as Britain's top representative in Washington last year after emails emerged detailing his associations with Epstein. The correspondence reignited controversy surrounding Mandelson, who has previously acknowledged knowing Epstein but denied any involvement in or knowledge of his criminal activities. According to the reports, Mandelson said he had taken the decision to resign from the party in order to avoid causing further embarrassment to the Labour government.

Israel Reopens Rafah Crossing, Allowing Palestinian Movement

Israel reopened Gaza's Rafah crossing with Egypt, allowing limited pedestrian movement after months of closure amid ceasefire efforts.

GAZA

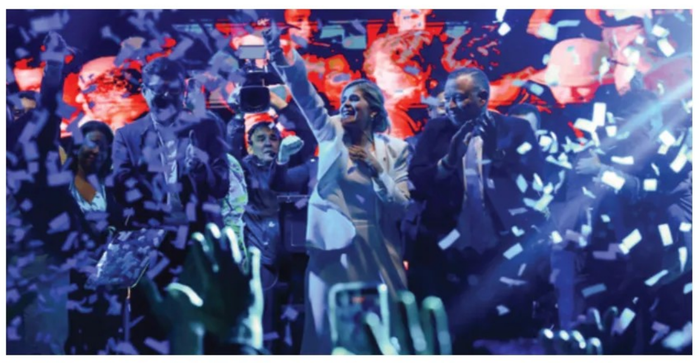
Israel on Monday reopened the border between Gaza and Egypt, marking a significant but tightly controlled step in easing restrictions on movement after months of intense conflict. The decision allows Palestinians to cross the border on foot, enabling some residents to leave the enclave while also permitting the return of those who had fled during the height of the war.

The reopening of the Rafah border crossing comes with strict limitations. Israeli authorities have insisted on comprehensive security checks for anyone entering or exiting Gaza, reflecting ongoing concerns over militant activity and the fragile nature of the ceasefire. Officials from both Israel and Egypt are also expected to enforce caps on the number of travelers allowed to cross each day, underscoring that the move is a controlled humanitarian measure rather than a full restoration of border operations.

Israel had seized control of the crossing in May 2024, roughly nine months into the devastating Gaza war. That conflict caused widespread destruction, displaced large segments of the population, and sharply curtailed access to humanitarian aid and civilian travel. The fighting was brought to a tenuous halt by an October ceasefire brokered by U.S. President Donald Trump, whose mediation efforts aimed to freeze hostilities and lay the groundwork for broader de-escalation.

Reopening Rafah was identified as a key requirement under the first phase of Trump's broader plan to halt fighting between Israel and Hamas militants. The crossing has long been Gaza's primary gateway to the outside world that does not pass directly through Israeli territory, giving it immense strategic and humanitarian importance.

An Israeli security official confirmed that European monitoring teams had arrived at the crossing to oversee operations and ensure compliance with agreed procedures. According to the official, the crossing has now opened to the movement of residents, for both entry and exit, signaling cautious progress while emphasizing vigilance.



Laura Fernandez Wins Costa Rica Election

Right-wing populist Laura Fernandez secured a decisive election victory in Costa Rica, promising irreversible change and a new political era.

SAN JOSE

Right-wing populist Laura Fernandez achieved a commanding victory in Costa Rica's general elections on Sunday, reshaping the political landscape of the Central American nation. With 88.43% of ballots counted, Fernandez had secured nearly half of the total votes cast, enough to win outright and avoid a second-round runoff scheduled for April 5. Her party is also projected to gain a majority in Congress, strengthening her mandate and positioning her to implement an ambitious agenda with fewer legislative obstacles.

Fernandez, who had consistently led opinion polls in the weeks ahead of the vote, needed at least 40% of the vote to clinch a first-round victory. As results confirmed her success, she delivered a fiery victory speech declaring a profound transformation for the country. Change will be deep and irreversible, she told cheering supporters, adding that Costa Rica was entering a new political era. According to Fernandez, the nation's second republic — established after the 1948 civil war — is a thing of the past.

Speaking to a sea of flag-waving supporters in San Jose, Fernandez called on citizens to participate in what she described as a historic moment. It's up to us to build the third republic, she said, framing her presidency as a break from decades of centrist and traditional party rule in Costa Rica. Her rhetoric resonated strongly with voters seeking tougher stances on governance, security, and economic reform.

Celebrations erupted at the Hispanidad Fountain, a popular gathering point for national sporting and political events. Supporters arrived by car and on foot, waving Costa Rican flags and holding stuffed jaguars — a symbol adopted by Fernandez's party to represent strength, renewal, and national pride. The festive atmosphere reflected the scale of her victory and the enthusiasm among her base.

Fernandez's closest rival, Alvaro Ramos, a centrist economist, secured roughly one-third of the vote. While Ramos mounted a competitive campaign, he was unable to overcome Fernandez's momentum and populist appeal. Claudia Dobles, a progressive architect and former first lady, finished a distant third with just under 5% of the vote, underscoring the electorate's shift away from traditional progressive platforms.

With a strong presidential win and a supportive Congress, Fernandez now faces heightened expectations. Supporters see an opportunity for decisive governance, while critics warn that her talk of ending the second republic could test Costa Rica's long-standing democratic institutions.

Germany Reaffirms Alignment With U.S. Over China Despite Strains

FRANKFURT

Germany will not pursue an equal-distance approach between the United States and China and will remain closer to Washington despite recent tensions, Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said Monday. Speaking in Singapore, he stressed that Berlin's strategic and security priorities remain firmly anchored in the transatlantic partnership.

At a lecture hosted by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Wadephul said the United States remains the most important partner for both Germany and Europe. Despite disagreements and policy differences, he noted, Europe continues to depend heavily on Washington for its security architecture.

Germany is not equidistant, Wadephul said, emphasizing that Berlin's relationship with the United States differs fundamentally from its ties with China. While acknowledging that some issues are currently alienating Washington from parts of the region, he argued that such frictions do not change the strategic reality of Europe's reliance on U.S. military and security support.

The remarks come amid wider European debates on balancing ties with major powers. While China is a crucial trading partner for Germany, Wadephul stressed that economic engagement must not be confused with security alignment, reaffirming the transatlantic bond as Europe's defense cornerstone in practice today.

Iran warned of a wider regional conflict if attacked by the United States, sharply escalating tensions with Washington.

Iran Warns of Regional War if Attacked by United States

TEHRAN

Iran's leadership on Sunday issued a stark warning that any military strike by the United States could ignite a broader regional conflict, further inflaming already heightened tensions between Iran and the United States. In a retaliatory political move, Tehran also designated European Union armies as terrorist groups, underscoring the depth of its confrontation with Western powers.

The warning comes as Washington has significantly increased its naval presence in the Middle East. U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened intervention against Iran, saying action could follow if Tehran fails to agree to a nuclear deal or does not halt the killing of protesters. These statements have sharpened anxieties across the region, where rival

powers and key shipping routes make any escalation particularly sensitive.

Despite the sharp rhetoric, both sides have signalled that the door to diplomacy remains open. Officials in Tehran and Washington have indicated a willingness to resume talks, even as pressure tactics continue. Regional actors have also stepped in to reduce tensions, with Turkey among those urging de-escalation and dialogue to prevent a spiral into open conflict.

Confusion briefly intensified on Sunday after Iran's state-run Press TV reported that the naval forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps would conduct live-fire exercises in the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz. The narrow strait is one of the world's most important oil transit routes, and any military activity there tends to alarm global markets. However, an Iranian official later denied the report, telling Reuters that there were no such plans and that the media accounts were incorrect.

Adding to the defiant tone, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei dismissed U.S. military posturing in remarks carried by state media. Referring to Trump's statements about deploying ships to the region, Khamenei said the Iranian nation would not be intimidated. The Iranian nation shall not be scared by these things, he was quoted as saying, adding that the people would not be stirred by threats.

Shifting Loyalties Challenge Thaksin's Stronghold as Thai Voters

THAILAND

In a small gathering with friends, rubber farmer Pinittaya Boonlieng discussed how to cast his vote in the February 8 general election, reflecting a growing uncertainty among voters in one of Thailand's most politically significant regions. The conversation took place in northeastern Thailand, long regarded as a reliable stronghold for allies of former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, whose populist appeal once made electoral choices in the area almost automatic.

For decades, Thaksin's Pheu Thai Party has dominated agrarian provinces such as Ubon Ratchathani and its neighbors. Policies aimed at rural development, farmer debt relief, and social welfare cemented deep loyalty among working-class and farming communities. In election after election, northeastern voters delivered decisive victories to Thaksin-aligned parties, making the region a political bedrock of Thailand's populist movement.

That dominance, however, is showing signs of strain. As the upcoming election approaches, many voters say their allegiance is no longer guaranteed. Instead of voting strictly along party lines, they are increasingly weighing the personal influence, resources, and perceived effectiveness of individual candidates. Local networks, patronage ties, and promises of constituency-level development are playing a larger role in shaping voter preferences than in previous contests.

Political analysts note that this shift reflects broader changes in Thailand's political landscape. Repeated cycles of political upheaval, military interventions, and court rulings against Thaksin-linked parties have altered voter expectations. Some rural voters express frustration that despite decades of loyalty, their economic circumstances have not improved as much as promised. Others say younger voters are less attached to historic political loyalties and more willing to experiment with alternatives.

Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte Faces Fresh Impeachment Complaints

METRO MELINA

Philippine Vice President Sara Duterte faced another round of impeachment complaints on Monday, intensifying political pressure on one of the country's most prominent leaders. Rights groups and activist organizations filed the complaints, accusing Duterte of betraying public trust, corruption, and other alleged crimes, claims her office has consistently denied in the past.

Duterte, the daughter of former president Rodrigo Duterte, remains a powerful figure in Philippine politics and is widely regarded as a frontrunner for the 2028 presidential election. The renewed impeachment push comes despite her having survived similar efforts last year, highlighting persistent opposition from civil society groups critical of her leadership and political influence.

In 2025, lawmakers attempted to initiate impeachment proceedings against Duterte, but the effort ultimately failed after the Supreme Court of the Philippines struck down the bid. The court ruled that the move violated constitutional safeguards, reinforcing the high legal threshold required to remove a sitting vice president from office. That decision was widely seen as a significant legal victory for Duterte and a setback for her critics.

The latest complaints accuse Duterte of actions that allegedly undermine democratic accountability and good governance. Rights advocates argue that impeachment is necessary to uphold constitutional principles and ensure transparency among the country's top officials. Activists staging protests alongside the filing of the complaints said the process itself, even if unsuccessful, serves as a public reckoning of alleged abuses of power.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	5	6		1		4		3
2		3	8		4		9	
9			2				1	6
1		5		9			4	
	6		1		8	3		9
3		4		7		6		1
5		1		8		9		4
4	3			5	1		6	
		8	4		9		3	

3	4	9	8	5	6	2	7	1
5	8	1	7	3	2	6	9	4
6	7	2	9	4	1	8	3	5
2	6	5	3	7	8	4	1	9
4	9	7	6	1	5	3	8	2
8	1	3	2	9	4	5	6	7
7	2	8	4	6	9	1	5	3
9	5	4	1	8	3	7	2	6
1	3	6	5	2	7	9	4	8

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

TAKAICHI POLL LANDSLIDE

Poll Predicts Landslide Win for Takaichi's Party

TOKYO

Japan's political landscape appears set for continuity as Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and her ruling party head into next week's lower house election with strong momentum. A survey published by the Asahi Shimbun indicates that Takaichi's party is likely to secure a commanding victory, significantly exceeding the threshold required for a parliamentary majority.

According to the poll, Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party is projected to well surpass the 233-seat majority mark in the 465-member lower house. If realized, this would represent a notable increase from its current 198 seats, consolidating the prime minister's grip on party leadership and strengthening her authority within government. A decisive win on Sunday would provide a clear mandate for Takaichi's expansionary fiscal agenda, centered on large-scale public spending and tax reductions aimed at sustaining economic growth.

Supporters argue that continued fiscal stimulus is necessary to maintain momentum in an economy grappling with demographic challenges and global uncertainty. However, economists and market participants are increasingly voicing concerns about the longer-term implications for Japan's public finances, already among the most strained in the developed world.

Ryutaro Kono, chief Japan economist at BNP Paribas, warned that implementing expansionary fiscal policy when the economy is near full employment could have significant side effects. Such a policy stance, he said, would heighten inflationary pressures and further weaken the yen, which has already faced downward pressure in recent months. Rising inflation expectations could, in turn, push government bond yields higher, increasing borrowing costs for the state.

These dynamics may also complicate monetary policy. Kono noted that the Bank of Japan could be forced to accelerate the pace of interest rate hikes to counter both currency weakness and inflation driven by fiscal expansion. Any shift toward tighter monetary conditions would mark a delicate balancing act for policymakers seeking to support growth while maintaining financial stability.

Harmanpreet, Smriti, Divya among nominees for 2025 BBC Sports Awards

Cricket leaders and young stars headline prestigious BBC Indian Sportswoman shortlist

NEW DELHI

Indian women's sport continues its golden run as cricket captain Harmanpreet Kaur, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana and chess prodigy Divya Deshmukh have been nominated for the 2025 BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year Awards. Pistol shooter Suruchi Singh and track and field athlete Jyothi Yarraji complete the five-member shortlist for the prestigious annual honour.

The nominations recognise outstanding performances across disciplines in 2025, a year that witnessed several landmark achievements for Indian women athletes on the global stage.

Harmanpreet led from the front in India's historic ICC Women's World Cup triumph in November 2025, the country's maiden title in the tournament. Playing on home soil, she produced a match-winning 89 in the semi-final against Australia while chasing a daunting target. Her leadership and big-match temperament once again underlined her status as one of India's finest cricketers. Harmanpreet has previously featured in Time magazine's Top 100 Emerging Leaders list and BBC's 100 Most Inspiring Women.

Smriti Mandhana, already regarded as one of the most elegant batters of her generation, continued to scale new

heights. The left-hander holds the second-highest number of ODI centuries among active players and smashed the fastest ODI hundred by an Indian last year. A two-time ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year, Mandhana's consistency remains central to India's success. In chess, 20-year-old Divya Deshmukh scripted history by becoming the youngest and first Indian winner of the FIDE Women's World Cup in 2025, earning the grandmaster title in the process. Her rise symbolised a new era for Indian chess.

Shooter Suruchi Singh impressed with a golden treble at ISSF World Cups, while hurdler Jyothi Yarraji continued to rewrite national records and dominate Asian competitions.

According to the BBC, the athletes were shortlisted by an eminent jury after evaluating performances over the past year, celebrating excellence and inspiration in Indian women's sport.

Hazlewood won't join Aus squad early in T20 WC: Selector Dodemaide

Pacer continues rehabilitation at home, to link up with team later

SYDNEY

Australian fast bowler Josh Hazlewood will not travel with the national squad for the early part of the ICC T20 World Cup in Sri Lanka as he continues his rehabilitation from injury, national selector Tony Dodemaide said.

Hazlewood will remain in Sydney during the opening phase of the tournament, which begins on February 7, to continue his return-to-play programme in familiar conditions. Australia's first four preliminary matches will be played in Colombo and Pallekele, starting February 11 against Ireland.

"Nathan, Tim and Glenn have arrived in Colombo and we look forward to meeting up with them when we arrive from Pakistan," Dodemaide said. "With Josh, we felt it was more practical and beneficial for him to continue his rehabilitation at home before travelling to Sri Lanka."

The trio of Nathan Ellis, Tim David and Glenn Maxwell have already reached Colombo and will join the rest of the squad on Tuesday. Sean Abbott has been added to the touring party as a travelling reserve, primarily as fast-bowling cover.

Hazlewood was earlier ruled out of the 2025-26 Ashes series after suffering a lingering Achilles injury during his recovery from a previous hamstring strain. Dodemaide did not specify when the senior pacer would be available to feature in the World Cup.

Australia's group-stage campaign will conclude on February 20, with Oman, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe rounding out their preliminary group alongside Ireland.

The Australian pace attack has already been dealt a blow with skipper Pat Cummins ruled out of the entire tournament due to a persistent back injury. Cummins has been replaced in the 15-man squad by left-arm seamer Ben Dwarshuis.

Explaining Abbott's inclusion, Dodemaide said he would provide insurance for Ellis, who is also completing his return from injury. "Sean is an accomplished and versatile international player who has experienced numerous World Cup campaigns. It made sense for him to stay with the group following the Pakistan tour," he said.

The T20 World Cup will be staged across venues in India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8.

Politics and security concerns have earlier forced teams to forfeit World Cup games

Past instances of teams forfeiting matches in ICC events

NEW DELHI

Pakistan's decision to boycott its marquee ICC T20 World Cup group match against India has once again brought politics into sharp focus in international cricket.

While the move could invite serious repercussions and possible sanctions from the International Cricket Council (ICC), history shows this is not the first time teams have forfeited matches in ICC events due to non-cricketing reasons.

Cricket may be known as the "gentleman's game", but global tournaments have often been affected by political tensions, diplomatic disputes and security concerns. There have been four notable instances in the past where World Cup matches were forfeited, altering the course of major ICC events.

1996 World Cup: Australia vs Sri Lanka

The 1996 World Cup, co-hosted by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, was overshadowed by security fears. Sri Lanka was facing internal unrest, and a bomb explosion weeks before the tournament heightened concerns. Australia refused to travel to Colombo for their group match and forfeited the game, conceding points. Ironically, Australia later played Sri Lanka in the final at Lahore, where the island nation clinched its maiden World Cup title.

1996 World Cup: West Indies vs Sri Lanka

Following Australia's decision, the West Indies also declined to tour Sri Lanka and forfeited their group match. Despite the setback, the West Indies reached the semifinals, where they suffered a dramatic defeat to Australia after being in a strong position. In a show of regional solidarity, India and Pakistan even fielded a combined team in a friendly against Sri Lanka before the tournament.

2003 World Cup: England vs Zimbabwe

The 2003 World Cup, hosted by South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya, saw England refuse to travel to Harare due to diplomatic tensions between the UK government and the Robert Mugabe administration. England forfeited the match, while Zimbabwe players Andy Flower and Henry Olonga made global headlines by wearing black armbands to protest the political situation in their country.

2003 World Cup: New Zealand vs Kenya

In the same tournament, New Zealand declined to play in Nairobi citing security concerns following a deadly suicide bomb attack in Mombasa. The ICC rejected New Zealand's request to shift the match, leading to another forfeiture.

These episodes underline how external factors have repeatedly disrupted ICC events, making Pakistan's current decision part of a troubled historical pattern.

BCCI backs ICC warning to Pakistan over India match boycott: Rajeev Shukla

NEW DELHI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday backed the International Cricket Council's decision to warn Pakistan over its proposed boycott of the high-profile T20 World Cup group match against India, scheduled to be played in Colombo on February 15. BCCI vice-president Rajeev Shukla said the Indian board fully agreed with the ICC's emphasis on sportsmanship and would refrain from making further comments until formal discussions with the global body.

"The ICC has issued a big statement on this subject. It has highlighted the element of sportsmanship. We completely agree with the ICC. BCCI will not make any comment until we speak to the ICC," Shukla told reporters.

Pakistan's decision, communicated through an official government statement, is being viewed as a political protest following a series of contentious developments surrounding the tournament. The ICC has already cautioned the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) that a selective pull-out from the marquee fixture could invite punitive sanctions, stressing that such a move is not in the broader interests of the game.

The controversy has been further fuelled by diplomatic tensions in the region and earlier disputes involving Bangladesh, including the removal of pacer Mustafizur Rahman from the Indian Premier League. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor criticised the politicisation of sport, calling the situation "disgraceful" and urging all parties to step back from escalating the standoff.

Indian board endorses ICC stand, awaits further discussions before commenting further

The India-Pakistan clash is traditionally the most watched fixture in any ICC tournament, commanding massive global audiences and significant commercial interest. Broadcasters and sponsors are believed to be facing potential losses estimated between Rs 200 crore and Rs 250 crore if the match does not go ahead as scheduled.

Pakistan are set to begin their T20 World Cup campaign against the Netherlands on February 7, with all their group matches slated to be played in Colombo.

Karnataka pull off a heist to enter quarters

BENGALURU

There are red-ball games that unfold slowly before bursting into life late, and Karnataka's Ranji Trophy Elite Group B clash against Punjab was a classic case. What appeared to be a tame draw for most of four days transformed into a breathtaking finish as Karnataka chased down 250 in just 27.3 overs to seal a quarterfinal berth at the IS Bindra Stadium in Mohali.

Led by skipper Devdutt Padikkal, who struck a sensational unbeaten 120 off just 85 balls, Karnataka completed a five-wicket win that will be remembered as one of the boldest fourth-innings chases in recent Ranji history. The result ensured Karnataka finished second in Group B with 27 points from seven matches — three wins, three draws and one loss — just a point behind group toppers Madhya Pradesh.

The victory also marked a strong start to a new leadership phase, easing the pressure after a damaging defeat to MP earlier had left qualification hanging by a thread. Karnataka will now face Mumbai in the fourth quarterfinal, starting February 6.

Set an improbable target within a time frame of around 40 overs, Karnataka went all-in from the start. Padikkal promoted himself to open alongside KL Rahul, signalling clear intent. Though Rahul fell early, Padikkal and former skipper Mayank Agarwal counter-attacked brilliantly, adding 113 runs in just 76 balls. Agarwal's brisk 53 kept the momentum alive before a brief wobble threatened to derail the chase.

Padikkal then found support from Shreyas Gopal, and later Vidyadhar Patil, to calmly see Karnataka home at 252/5.

Earlier, Punjab captain Uday Saharan played a resolute knock of 93 to push his side to 256, but Karnataka's bowlers wrapped up the tail swiftly after lunch. The daring chase that followed turned a tense contest into a stunning heist, underlining Karnataka's knockout pedigree once again.

Alcaraz plans a kangaroo tattoo to remember Australian Open victory

MELBOURNE

Fresh off completing a historic career Grand Slam, Carlos Alcaraz says he is considering getting a kangaroo tattoo as a permanent reminder of his Australian Open triumph. The 22-year-old Spaniard sealed his place in tennis history on Sunday by defeating Novak Djokovic in the men's singles final, becoming the youngest male player to win all four major titles.

"I already know it's going to be a kangaroo. I just don't know the place," Alcaraz said on Monday, a day after lifting the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup. "I'm thinking about the leg, but I don't know which calf — the right or the left."

Alcaraz posed with the trophy at the Royal Exhibition Building in central Melbourne, cutting a relaxed figure in black attire, loafers and no socks. According to Australian media reports, he celebrated the night of his victory quietly with family, ordering pizza, beer and champagne at his hotel.

Reflecting on the final, where he rallied to beat 10-time Australian Open champion Djokovic 2-6, 6-2, 6-3, 7-5, Alcaraz admitted the emotions nearly overwhelmed him. "Before the last point, a lot of things came to my mind. I was really nervous, I was shaking," he said. "Once I saw the ball go out, I was like, 'Alright, I made it.'"

The win placed Alcaraz in an elite group, joining Don Budge, Fred Perry, Roy Emerson, Rod Laver, Andre Agassi, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Djokovic as only the ninth man to complete a career Grand Slam. He achieved the feat younger than all of them, even Budge.

With the milestone achieved, Alcaraz has already set new goals.

'Let's call off this nonsense': Tharoor on Pakistan's India match boycott

NEW DELHI

Congress Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor on Monday strongly criticised Pakistan's decision to boycott its high-profile ICC T20 World Cup group match against India, calling the move "pretty disgraceful" and urging all stakeholders to keep politics out of cricket.

Reacting to Pakistan's refusal to travel to India for the marquee clash, Tharoor said the current impasse should never have arisen and warned that the politicisation of sport was spiralling out of control. The four-time MP, a self-confessed cricket enthusiast, also stressed the need for greater transparency and dialogue in resolving issues beyond the boundary.

"It's pretty disgraceful that sport has been politicised in this way on both sides, frankly. I don't think that Mustafizur should have been denied his contract to play in Kolkata. It was a most unfortunate intrusion of politics," Tharoor was quoted as saying.

Pakistan's stance is widely being seen as an act of solidarity with Bangladesh, which was dropped from the tournament after refusing to send its team to India citing security concerns. The situation escalated following the ouster of Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman from the Indian Premier League, a move that triggered diplomatic and sporting fallout in the region.

Congress MP urges depoliticising cricket amid Pakistan's decision to forfeit marquee clash

While Tharoor felt Bangladesh's response was an overreaction, he said Pakistan's subsequent decision had only compounded the crisis. "This whole thing is spiralling out of control," he remarked, adding that cricket should serve as a bridge between nations rather than a battleground for political disputes.

Following Pakistan's boycott announcement, the International Cricket Council issued a stern warning, cautioning that the move could have long-term repercussions and urging the Pakistan Cricket Board to explore a mutually acceptable solution.

Calling it a wake-up call, Tharoor appealed for immediate dialogue. "Sports, especially cricket which means so much to people, should bring us together at least on the playing field.

The ICC could be the platform for urgent talks. Let's just call off this nonsense. You can't go on like this forever," he said.

The India-Pakistan clash remains the most anticipated fixture of any ICC event, and uncertainty over it continues to cast a shadow over the tournament.

QUICK READ

Commodities Slide Sharply as Kevin Warsh Fed Pick Triggers Risk-Off

Singapore

Commodities markets suffered a sharp sell-off on Monday, led by steep losses in precious metals, oil, and industrial metals, as investors reassessed risk following the choice of Kevin Warsh as the next chair of the Federal Reserve. The prospect of a more hawkish monetary policy stance triggered a broad retreat from risk assets, sending prices tumbling for a second consecutive session. Gold bore the brunt of the sell-off, sliding around 9% to its lowest level in more than two weeks. The decline marked a dramatic reversal after bullion had surged to record highs just last week, driven by expectations of looser monetary conditions and persistent geopolitical uncertainty. Silver fared even worse, plunging more than 13% as investors rushed to lock in profits after the metal's recent rally to historic peaks.

Asian Shares Slide as Precious Metals Rout Spooks Markets Ahead

Mumbai

Asian share markets followed Wall Street futures deep into negative territory on Monday, as violent selling in precious metals unsettled investors at the start of a week packed with corporate earnings, central bank meetings, and key economic data. The sharp moves underscored fragile market sentiment after last week's dramatic reversal in commodities spilled over into broader risk assets. Equity markets across the Asia-Pacific region opened lower, tracking steep losses in U.S. futures tied to Wall Street. Traders said the scale and speed of the sell-off in precious metals, particularly silver, had injected a fresh dose of anxiety into markets already bracing for major policy signals and earnings guidance from global companies.

Clash Over Cocoa Spin-Off Led to Departure of Barry Callebaut CEO Peter Feld

Zurich

Barry Callebaut, the world's largest chocolate maker, parted ways with its former chief executive Peter Feld last month following an internal clash over strategy, according to two sources familiar with the matter. The disagreement, which had not been previously reported, centered on a proposal to separate the company's cocoa business from its broader chocolate operations. The Swiss-based group, Barry Callebaut, supplies chocolate and cocoa products to food manufacturers and confectionery brands worldwide. Feld, who had been leading the company during a period of volatile cocoa prices and supply disruptions, reportedly pushed for a structural split that would carve out the cocoa division as a standalone business.

AI, Drones and Sensors Transform Spanish Farms With EU Fund

Across Spain, EU-funded sensors and drones are powering AI tools to modernise farming and cut emissions.

PARIS

In olive groves and vineyards spread across Spain, a quiet technological shift is underway. Sensors buried in soil and drones flying overhead are collecting vast amounts of data, feeding artificial intelligence models designed to help farmers manage crops more efficiently and sustainably. The technology, paid for by Europe's largest recovery programme since the post-war Marshall Plan, aims to modernise agriculture while reducing its environmental footprint.

The initiative is part of the European Union's €955-billion Next Generation recovery fund, agreed six years ago in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund, formally known as Next Generation EU, was created to revive economies, accelerate the green transition and push digital transformation across the bloc. As final payout deadlines approach, projects like these Spanish farming pilots are increasingly cited as examples of the fund's intended impact.

In regions heavily dependent on agriculture, farmers are using real-time data on soil moisture, temperature, nutrient levels and plant health to make more precise decisions about irrigation, fertiliser use and harvesting. AI-driven models analyse the information and provide recommendations, helping growers reduce water consumption, cut costs and limit emissions linked to over-fertilisation and inefficient energy use.

The focus on agriculture reflects its importance to Spain's economy, as well as the challenges it faces from climate change. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and unpredictable weather patterns have placed increasing pressure on farmers, particularly in olive oil and wine-producing regions. EU officials say digital tools can help make farms more resilient while supporting the bloc's climate targets.

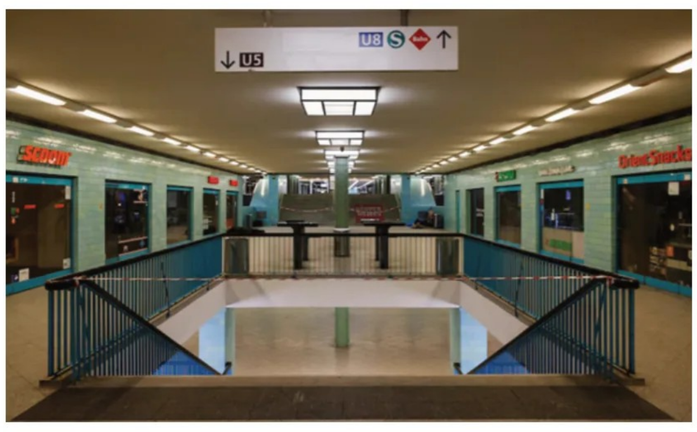
European policymakers have repeatedly stressed that the recovery fund is not simply about short-term stimulus. Instead, it is designed to reshape key sectors for the long term by pairing decarbonisation with digitalisation. Agriculture, often seen as traditional and slow to adopt new technologies, has emerged as a testing ground for how innovation can be scaled with public funding.

However, challenges remain. Some small farmers worry about the cost of maintaining advanced systems once subsidies end, while others point to gaps in digital skills in rural areas. EU and national authorities say training programmes and cooperative models are being developed to ensure the technology is accessible beyond large commercial operations.

Tens of thousands of German transport workers went on strike, leaving commuters stranded amid freezing temperatures nationwide.

Germany Hit by Nationwide Transport Strike as Verdi Walkout Halts Buses and Trams

BERLIN



Commuters across Germany faced widespread disruption on Monday as tens of thousands of public transport workers walked off the job in a nationwide strike called by the trade union Verdi. The walkout shut down bus and tram services in most cities, leaving empty platforms and forcing travelers to seek alternative means of transport during freezing morning conditions.

Verdi, which represents nearly 100,000 public transport workers, announced the strike after negotiations with municipal and state employers over working conditions broke down last week. The union is pressing for shorter shifts, longer rest breaks, and higher pay for night and weekend work, arguing that the current demands placed on drivers and operational staff are unsustainable. Employers, however, have pointed to mounting budget constraints faced by cities already struggling with rising energy costs and inflation.

The industrial action affected around 150 municipal transport companies across all but one of Germany's 16 federal states. Major urban centers including Berlin, Hamburg, and Bremen were among those where buses and trams remained largely idle throughout the day. In many cities, local authorities advised residents to work from home if possible or allow extra time for travel.

Union officials described the strike as one of the largest coordinated actions in the local transport sector in years. The strike began as planned, said Serat Canyurt, Verdi's lead negotiator, in an interview with rbb radio on Monday. He added that the scale of the walkout was intended to send a clear signal to employers and force them back to the negotiating table.

Municipal employers expressed disappointment over the disruption but maintained that meeting all of Verdi's demands would put additional strain on already stretched public finances. Some warned that higher labor costs could ultimately lead to fare increases or reduced services in the long term.

For passengers, the strike was the latest reminder of growing labor tensions across Germany, where unions in several sectors have stepped up industrial action to protect wages and working conditions amid high living costs. Analysts say further strikes cannot be ruled out if talks fail to resume soon.

Union Budget empty on key issues, high on optics: Congress MP

NEW DELHI

Congress MP Gurjeet Singh Aujla on Monday criticised the Union Budget 2026, alleging that the government has presented data only for media hype and failed to address key issues affecting the country. Speaking to IANS, Gurjeet Singh Aujla said that the budget offers no concrete solutions to the growing problem of unemployment.

In this budget, there is no solution for unemployment. There is no serious discussion on industry or how it will take the country forward. The allocation for health and education is very low. Can the government honestly say that the education system across the country is doing very well? Overall, the government has presented data only to create media hype, he said.

The Congress MP further claimed that the budget lacks substance and fails to deliver real benefits to the people.

There is nothing in the Budget in reality. It is an empty budget, and there is nothing for Punjab. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Punjab yesterday, but he went empty-handed and returned empty-handed, Aujla told IANS.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Union Budget 2026, marking her ninth consecutive budget presentation. The Finance Minister stated that the Budget was inspired by three 'kartavyas' or responsibilities aimed at accelerating and sustaining economic growth by enhancing competitiveness, fulfilling aspirations, and ensuring that every family, community, and region has access to resources and opportunities for participation.

Commenting on Pakistan's decision to boycott its T20 World Cup match against India, Aujla said that India should take a firm stand.

I think India should boycott Pakistan first. We keep talking about Operation Sindoor and how it is progressing, yet matches are still being played. If Pakistan is boycotting the match, it shows they have already accepted defeat at the first stage. This decision should now be taken by the BCCI and Jay Shah, he said.

At 93, E Sreedharan pushes ahead with Kerala High-Speed Rail vision

MALAPPURAM

Undeterred by age, Metro Man E. Sreedharan on Monday reaffirmed his determination to see the proposed high-speed rail project for Kerala become a reality, inaugurating the project's official office at 9 a.m. at Ponnani in Malappuram, close to the residence where he currently lives. The inauguration was marked by a simple yet symbolic ceremony, with his wife taking the lead in lighting the traditional lamp, underscoring the personal commitment behind the ambitious initiative.

At 93, Sreedharan remains resolute that he will continue to work as a professional master builder, staying true to the vocation that has defined his life and produced some of the country's most iconic infrastructure projects.

Speaking on the occasion, Sreedharan said the absence of any mention of the project in the Union Budget would not dampen his resolve.

He expressed firm confidence that approval from the Railway Ministry would eventually come, stressing that the infrastructure of this scale requires perseverance and clarity of purpose.

In the initial phase, the newly opened office will function as a public interface to address doubts and concerns surrounding the project.

From February 15, a series of meetings will be held to explain the technical, financial and social aspects of the high-speed rail corridor to the public.

The first round of meetings will begin in Malappuram, after which similar outreach programmes will be organised in other districts through which the proposed alignment will pass.

Sreedharan also said that his discussions with the Union Railway Minister on January 16 were productive.

According to him, the Minister has instructed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) be prepared, and an official order authorising the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) to undertake this task is expected within three to four days.

Musk's Empire Eyes a Smaller First Step as SpaceX Nears IPO and Considers xAI Deal

WASHINGTON

As Elon Musk's companies face pivotal transitions, supporters of a Musk mega-merger are urging a more cautious start.

For years, fans of Elon Musk and Musk himself have floated the idea of Musk Inc, a sweeping merger that would unite the billionaire's far-flung businesses under one corporate umbrella. The concept has ranged from serious strategic speculation to online fantasy. Now, as Musk's empire enters a critical phase, even some long-time proponents of a grand conglomerate are calling for a more incremental approach.

The shift in thinking comes as SpaceX is expected to go public later this year, a milestone that would subject the rocket maker to greater scrutiny from investors and regulators. At the same time, Tesla is navigating a difficult transition from its core electric vehicle business toward an ambitious future centered on robotaxis and humanoid robots. That transformation has raised questions about near-term profitability, capital allocation, and execution risk.

Against this backdrop, Reuters reported on Thursday that SpaceX is close to a deal to acquire xAI, Musk's artificial intelligence venture. Such a move would represent a far smaller and more focused step than a full-blown merger of Musk's companies, but one with potentially far-reaching implications.

According to the report, the acquisition would help pave the way for Musk's plans to develop data centers in space — an idea he has promoted as a solution to the enormous power demands of advanced AI systems. Musk has argued that space-based infrastructure, potentially powered by solar energy, could offer a cleaner and more scalable alternative to Earth-bound data centers that strain electrical grids and water resources.

Supporters of a broader Musk conglomerate see the potential SpaceX-xAI tie-up as a logical starting point. SpaceX's satellite and launch capabilities could complement xAI's computing ambitions, creating synergies without immediately entangling Tesla or other Musk-controlled firms such as X, formerly Twitter. Start where the technological overlap is strongest, one investor familiar with Musk-linked companies said, adding that public markets may be more comfortable with incremental integration than an all-at-once merger.

Skeptics, however, warn that even a smaller deal could raise governance and conflict-of-interest concerns, particularly once SpaceX becomes a publicly traded company. Investors are likely to scrutinize how resources are shared across Musk's ventures and whether strategic decisions primarily benefit shareholders or advance Musk's personal vision.

RBI Likely to Pause Rate Cuts as MPC Focuses on Liquidity and Market Stability

NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is set to convene its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting from February 4 to 6, with economists widely expecting a pause in further policy rate cuts. Instead of additional easing, analysts say the central bank is likely to rely on targeted measures to manage liquidity conditions, ensure bond market stability and mitigate currency-related risks.

The RBI has already delivered substantial monetary easing over the past year, cutting the repo rate by a cumulative 125 basis points since February 2025. This has brought the benchmark policy rate down to 5.25%, aimed at supporting economic growth amid global uncertainty and moderating inflation pressures. However, after the most recent rate cut in December 2025, economists believe the MPC will now adopt a more cautious stance.

Market participants expect the Monetary Policy Committee to assess the impact of past rate reductions before deciding on any further moves. With transmission of earlier cuts still working through the banking system, policymakers are seen as reluctant to risk overstimulating the economy or destabilising financial markets.

Attention is therefore likely to shift toward liquidity management tools, such as open market operations and variable rate repos, to address pockets of tightness or excess cash in the system. Analysts also expect the RBI to keep a close watch on government bond yields, which can come under pressure due to global interest rate volatility and heavy borrowing requirements. Maintaining orderly conditions in the bond market is considered crucial for both fiscal financing and overall financial stability.

Currency dynamics are another key consideration. With global capital flows sensitive to changes in interest rate differentials, the RBI may prefer to use targeted interventions rather than broad rate cuts to manage potential volatility in the rupee. Economists say this approach allows the central bank to respond flexibly without sending strong signals that could unsettle foreign investors.

Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist at DBS Bank, said the government's fiscal stance reduces pressure on monetary policy to do more. With the government remaining on course its fiscal consolidation path, we don't expect any material impact on the direction of monetary policy, she noted.

LAST-GASP MBAPPÉ PENALTY WINS IT

French star delivers stoppage-time winner as Madrid stay close behind league leaders

MADRID

Kylian Mbappé once again proved decisive for Real Madrid, converting a dramatic penalty deep into second-half stoppage time to secure a 2-1 La Liga victory over Rayo Vallecano at the Santiago Bernabeu. The win moved Madrid back within a point of table-toppers Barcelona, who defeated Elche 3-1.

Mbappé calmly slotted home the spot-kick nearly 10 minutes into added time, sealing his eighth goal in five matches and sparking wild celebrations among the home supporters. Vinícius Júnior had earlier given Madrid the lead, while Jorge De Frutos struck Rayo's equaliser shortly after the break.

The result came as a much-needed response for Madrid following their 4-2 defeat to Benfica in the Champions League, a loss that pushed them out of the automatic qualification places for the round of 16. "We wanted to change the image after a tough Champions League defeat," said midfielder Federico Valverde. "I think we played a great game."

Madrid endured an early setback when Jude Bellingham was forced off just 10 minutes into the match with a left hamstring injury. The England international appeared emotional as he walked off, casting doubt over his availability for the Champions League playoff against Benfica.

Despite being jeered early on, Vinícius silenced the crowd in the 15th minute with a superb solo effort, beating two defenders before curling a shot into the top corner. Rayo responded after the interval through De Frutos, capitalising on a brief lapse in Madrid's defence.

Rayo's task became harder after Pathé Ciss was sent off in the 80th minute, and they finished the game with nine men following Pep Chavarría's late dismissal. Mbappé, who had earlier hit the crossbar from close range, made no mistake from the penalty spot after Brahim Díaz was fouled.

Coach Álvaro Arbeloa praised his side's resilience. "The players gave everything. We needed the fans, and together we achieved it," he said.

Rayo dropped to 17th place, just outside the relegation zone, after a fourth straight defeat in all competitions.

Atletico Madrid seal deal for Ademola Lookman

Spanish club move quickly to bolster attack ahead of decisive league run

MADRID

Atletico Madrid confirmed that they have reached an agreement with Serie A side Atalanta for the transfer of Nigeria forward Ademola Lookman. The Spanish club said the deal is subject to the player passing a medical examination and finalising the terms of his contract.

Lookman has already arrived in Madrid and is scheduled to undergo his medical on Monday, Atletico said in a brief statement, without disclosing the length of the contract or the transfer fee involved.

The 28-year-old forward has been one of Atalanta's most influential attackers since joining the club in 2022. Known for his pace, direct running and ability to play across the frontline, Lookman enjoyed a productive spell in Italy after earlier stints in England and Germany.

Before moving to Atalanta, Lookman featured in the Premier League with Fulham, Leicester City and Everton, and also spent time in the Bundesliga with RB Leipzig. His performances in Serie A helped raise his profile further, both at club level and on the international stage.

Lookman recently showcased his quality at the Africa Cup of Nations, scoring three goals for Nigeria and playing a key role in their campaign. His displays at the continental tournament are believed to have attracted interest from several European clubs, with Atletico moving swiftly to secure his signature.

The transfer comes as Atletico look to strengthen their attacking options midway through the season. Diego Simeone's side currently sit third in La Liga after 22 matches, nine points behind second-placed Real Madrid and 10 adrift of leaders Barcelona.

With the title race still alive and European commitments looming, Atletico are keen to add depth and firepower to their squad. They are scheduled to face Club Brugge in the Champions League playoffs later this month, and Lookman's arrival could provide a timely boost as the club balances domestic and continental ambitions.

Arsenal edge Corinthians in rain-soaked final to lift inaugural intercontinental trophy

Foord's extra-time goal gives Arsenal 3-2 win over Corinthians in first Women's Champions Cup

LONDON

Caitlin Foord struck a decisive extra-time goal as Arsenal defeated Brazil's Corinthians 3-2 to win the inaugural Women's Champions Cup, sealing a dramatic victory in a rain-lashed final at the Emirates Stadium.

Arsenal appeared on course for victory in regulation time before Corinthians forced extra time by equalising deep into stoppage time through a Victoria penalty. Foord then restored Arsenal's lead in the 104th minute with a composed breakaway finish to clinch the historic title. The six-team Women's Champions Cup, created as an intercontinental competition for elite women's club sides, brought together champions from across the globe. Arsenal qualified as winners of the UEFA Women's Champions League and took home $2.3 million for lifting the trophy, while Corinthians earned $1 million as runners-up.

Olivia Smith opened the scoring in the 15th minute after Corinthians goalkeeper Leticia parried a shot from Stina Blackstenius into her path. Corinthians responded six minutes later when veteran midfielder Gabriela Zanotti found the net, her effort crossing the line just before Arsenal goalkeeper Anneke Borbe could recover.

Arsenal regained control in the 58th minute as Lotte Wubben-Moy headed home from an Emily Fox cross, with FIFA president Gianni Infantino in attendance. The London side looked set to lift the cup until a late video review awarded Corinthians a penalty for a foul by Katie McCabe, which Victoria calmly converted in second-half stoppage time. Foord's extra-time strike ultimately proved decisive, though the match ended on a worrying note for Arsenal as Borbe was stretchered off following a late collision.

Earlier, Gotham FC claimed third place with a 4-0 win over Morocco's ASFAR. The Champions Cup serves as a precursor to FIFA's upcoming 16-team Women's Club World Cup, set to debut in 2028.

Anahat Singh stuns world No.10 Georgina Kennedy to clinch maiden PSA Bronze title

CHENNAI

Teenage squash sensation Anahat Singh produced the finest performance of her young career, defeating top seed and world No. 10 Georgina Kennedy of England 12-10, 11-5, 11-7 to win the Squash on Fire Open title in Washington on Monday.

The victory marked Anahat's maiden PSA Bronze-level crown and the biggest title so far for the 16-year-old Indian, who is currently ranked world No. 31. It was also her 15th overall title on the PSA Tour, achieved in just her 26th professional tournament — an impressive return that underlines her rapid rise in the sport.

Seeded seventh in the tournament, Anahat avenged her only previous loss to Kennedy with a display of maturity and tactical clarity well beyond her years. The opening game proved decisive as the Delhi youngster held her nerve after trailing 8-10, reeling off four consecutive points to snatch it 12-10. From there, Anahat grew in confidence and dictated rallies with her tight length and sharp attacking shots.

Kennedy, one of the most consistent performers on the women's tour, struggled to find answers as Anahat controlled the pace and capitalised on errors. The second game slipped away quickly for the English player, with Anahat racing to an 11-5 win. In the third, the Indian stayed composed under pressure, closing out the match 11-7 to seal a straight-games triumph.

"I'm extremely happy," Anahat said after the final. "I knew I wanted to do well in these events, get my ranking up and also put on a performance, and I'm glad I was able to do that this time."

The title is expected to give Anahat a significant boost in the rankings and adds momentum to her push toward breaking into the world's top 50 — a goal she has previously identified as a key target.

Already regarded as one of India's brightest prospects in squash, Anahat's latest success against a top-10 opponent signals her growing presence on the global stage.

ICE, Epstein files 'sad' distractions from Winter Olympics: IOC president

MILAN

International Olympic Committee (IOC) president Kirsty Coventry described questions surrounding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the release of Jeffrey Epstein-related files as "sad" distractions from the Milan Cortina Winter Olympics, now less than a month away.

Speaking at a news conference in Milan, Coventry and other IOC officials were repeatedly pressed on issues tied to the United States, which has increasingly dominated the narrative ahead of the Feb. 6-22 Games. While declining to comment in detail, Coventry acknowledged that such controversies were diverting attention from the sporting spectacle.

"I think anything that is distracting from these Games is sad," Coventry said. "But we've learned over the many years there's always been something leading up to the Games — whether it was Zika, COVID — there has always been something."

Coventry said she remained confident that global attention would return to the athletes once competition begins. "When that opening ceremony happens and those athletes start competing, suddenly the world remembers the magic and the spirit that the Games have," she added. Her comments came a day after hundreds of demonstrators gathered in Milan to protest the deployment of ICE agents during the Olympics. Authorities have said the agents will be stationed in a control room and will not operate on the streets.

Coventry also faced questions about newly released government files linked to Epstein, which include 2003 emails involving Casey Wasserman, head of the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics organizing committee, and Ghislaine Maxwell. She said the IOC would not comment further, noting that Wasserman had already issued a statement.

Two IOC members were mentioned in the documents, though there is no suggestion of wrongdoing. Coventry said the IOC was monitoring reports and would review information as needed.

Efforts underway to bring Formula One racing back to India

NEW DELHI

After more than a decade, the Indian government is actively working to bring Formula 1 back to the Buddh International Circuit in Greater Noida. Officials are addressing tax and regulatory issues that led to the Indian Grand Prix's cancellation after 2013. The race, held from 2011 to 2013, gained global attention, with Sebastian Vettel winning all three editions. However, high taxes, customs duties, and financial losses forced its exit. Talks with Formula 1 Management are now reportedly underway to secure a slot on the crowded F1 calendar. India's growing automotive market adds commercial appeal, though competition from other host nations remains a challenge.

WIJK AAN ZEE

World champion D Gukesh was held to a draw by Hans Moke Niemann in the 12th and penultimate round of the Tata Steel Masters as Nodirbek Abdusattorov surged ahead with a commanding victory to move within touching distance of the title. Abdusattorov regained sole leadership with a crushing win over Germany's Matthias Bluebaum, taking his tally to eight points and opening a half-point gap over compatriot Javokhir Sindarov. Sindarov chose safety over ambition against R Praggnanandhaa, settling for a draw that left him second on 7.5 points and raised the prospect of an Uzbek domination in the season's first super-tournament.

Gukesh, playing with the black pieces, was involved in a wild and tactical encounter against Niemann. The American sacrificed material in a position that did not fully justify the risk, giving Gukesh chances to press home his advantage. However, inaccuracies from the Indian allowed Niemann to escape, and the game eventually petered out into a draw. With six points, Gukesh is now joint eighth alongside Dutchman Anish Giri.

Abdusattorov's win was a model of precision. Striking decisively on the queenside, the Uzbek star combined his queen and knight to weave a tactical net that Bluebaum could not break, underlining why he remains one of the most feared players in elite tournaments.

Behind the leaders, Niemann, Jorden van Foreest and Vincent Keymer share third place on seven points each. Turkish prodigy Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus continued to impress, crushing Vladimir Fedoseev in another decisive outing. In a rare moment of shared amusement, Erdogmus delivered checkmate just a move before Fedoseev could do the same, both players smiling at the dramatic finish.

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